

CHESTER'S SHARE.

BY M. A. ALDEN.

A SENSE of terror brooding everywhere, a sky lurid with smoke and flame, raining clinders instead of the gentle drops so needed.

Clang, clang, clang! the bells speaking their brazen-tongued warning. The sounds of hurrying feet and eager voices.

Chester Tracy found himself borne along with the crowd that hastened to the fire. He heard the cries of alarm as the remorseless flames gained ground, he saw the heavens grow dusky red as the buildings yielded to their destroyer; as if fascinated he drew nearer and nearer the dreadful scene.

The doors of a shop in front of him were burst suddenly open, and the people rushed headlong in, himself among them. The building was doomed and the goods were the prey of the people. Chester found himself stuffing his pockets, and loading himself in other ways; then, as the flames gained ground, with the crowd he rushed precipitately away.

Where to proceed with his plunder he had not considered, neither had he fully considered that it was plunder, but following the lead of some one in front of him, he paused at last in an open space away from the fire, one of a motley group each laden with spoil.

"Look a here, youngster," said some one at his side, "you've got more'n b'longs to you." And he snatched a portion of Chester's possessions and ran off.

Others, profiting by his example, plun-

dered the bewildered boy still further, and when, half dead with fatigue and bewilderment, he made his way home, he was empty-handed, he believed, as when he had left there early in the evening; more so, he found when he stopped to consider, for his employer's establishment was in close proximity to the burning portion of the city, and would, in all probability, be nothing on the morrow but a desolate ash-heap.

With this forlorn thought Chester entered the room where his mother and sister waited his coming with anxious hearts; and each exclaimed joyfully upon seeing him.

"Why, Chester, what is that?" his mother asked, noticing something shining that hung over the edge of his pocket.

Chester looked down at it.

"I don't know," he said; "I had a pocketful of something, but it was all grabbed."

"For shame, Charlie," said his sister; "how could you go about at such a time filling your pockets with other people's property?"

"I couldn't help it," said Chester; "I was just shoved into it." And he examined curiously the chain that in some incomprehensible way had found an abiding-place in his pocket.

"You haven't an idea where you got it?" his mother asked.

"Not the slightest." And Chester put his hand into his pocket to see if there were anything more remaining, and drew thence a pair of gloves, and several yards

of ribbon wrapped about with a paper bearing the name of the firm where it had belonged.

Chester read the name, and his mother advised him to lay the chain and other articles away until such a time as he could take them to the firm, and find out, if possible, to whom the chain belonged.

A day or two passed before Chester could follow this advice. The ribbon and the gloves of course found their rightful owner, who, asking Chester if he had a sister, bade him take them home to her. The chain he advised Chester to advertise, with little hope, however, that the owner would be found.

But Fortune seemed to wish to smile somewhere at such a time, and she smiled upon our hero; for the owner of the chain, valuing it more for the associations that surrounded it than for itself, insisted upon rewarding Chester in a very disproportionate manner—giving him a sufficient sum of money to more than compensate for the loss the fire was sure to bring him, as his employers had saved nothing, and could not pay him at once that which was due him.

More than this, the gentleman fancied

Chester, and took him into his own counting-room on trial, so that Chester said to his mother:

"I feel almost wicked, mother, I am so fortunate. So many have suffered from this fire, while I have gained so much—and without doing anything good or heroic either."

"Such contrasts are hard to explain," his mother said; "but since we have been so especially blessed at this sad time, we ought, I think, to look about for some others less fortunate, and share as much as possible with them."

"Yes," said Chester, "there's Jakey Evans that was with me at — & —'s; I mean to lend him a helping hand."

And, full of that purpose, Chester put on his cap and walked once more in the direction of the burning district, pondering with a sober face upon the terrible event, and wondering more and more at the share of it that had fallen to himself—a share that Jakey Evans had in time to be as thankful for as Chester, since it helped to keep him in employment, and relieved the poverty that threatened his home, alas, too often.

"COBBING" THE COOK.

BY W. H. MACY.

WE had sent our boats in at the island of St. Felix, in the Pacific Ocean, for a mess of fresh fish, a luxury to which our palates had for some months been strangers. We had, it is true, caught albacore and bonita, which made something of a change from the monotony of salt junk; but these were not to be compared with the really *fresh* fish, such as are caught on soundings. We now had some pulled up from the very base of the rocks, the flavor of which could be depended upon; and it was determined to have a genuine Yankee "chowder."

We had good evidence on board the Alaska for proving the truth of the old saying so common among sailors, that "the Almighty sends us grub, but the devil sends cooks." Our cook, who was a black Portuguese from one of the Cape Verde Islands, bore conspicuous marks of diabolical origin. Indeed he might well have sat for a portrait of the devil himself, horns, hoofs, tormentors and all. Unskillfulness in cookery is rather a trying evil for Jack, who is its victim, to endure; but this can be borne with a tolerable degree of philosophy, if the cook's habits be neat and cleanly. For seamen are far more fastidious in this little particular than their long-shore brothers and sisters give them credit for. When, as in our case, the presiding genius of the galley is noted for the filthy condition of that department, and for the utmost carelessness and slackness about his personal habits, the nuisance becomes intolerable.

The chowder was made, and the operation of cooking it having been supervised by some of the knowing ones, who had from time to time made flying visits to the galley, it was pronounced all right. For once they believed we might count on having a mess that would gladden both our palates and stomachs. "The Doctor" was sulky and his black mug even blacker than was natural to him, because he did not like this show of interest in the cookery, which he considered an unwarrantable interference with his prerogative. He never, of course, expressed his feelings in any such dictionary words as those I have used; but

his expletives were often quite as ponderous in their way. He was cordially hated by all hands, but there was a touch of fear mingled with this hatred; for Perez was a fellow of Herculean proportions and muscle, with a savage vindictive temper.

The tinpans rallied briskly round the cook's coppers when eight bells were struck, and each man was soon driving his spoon deep down into the savory mess, and, as he sipped the contents, smacking his lips with infinite gusto. Suddenly old Ben Knox held up something in his spoon, and rose to his feet with an expression of horror on his face.

"What's the matter, Ben?" shouted half a dozen voices in chorus.

"Does St. Felix fish have sich bones as them?" he asked, deliberately; and lowering his spoon, exhibited a short pipe or "dudheen," colored deeper than the most ardent meerschaum-fancier would desire—in fact, burned blacker than the cook's own visage, and still half-charged with burnt tobacco!

In an instant the whole fore-castle was up in arms. This was the feather that was to break the camel's back. There was no longer any hesitation about proceeding to active measures. A league, offensive and defensive, was at once made against the common enemy, and shouts of "Cob him! Cob him!" were raised in several quarters at once.

"Silence!" said old Ben, who had by a kind of tacit consent assumed the leadership in the business. "Don't give him the alarm beforehand! Keep silence, and follow me."

Up the ladder rushed all hands in procession, and made a charge upon the galley. Old Perez, all unconscious of his peril, was eating his own dinner very leisurely.

"Come out here, you dirty black thief!" roared old Knox, seizing him by his woolly head, while another gripped hold of his arm. The tinpan of chowder went crashing to the floor of the galley, the whites of the cook's eyes rolled up for a moment until he had taken in the situation. He had

no time to seize any weapon, but down went his head as a battering-ram into the stomach of his first assailant, who tumbled to the deck on short allowance of breath. A single jerk released his brawny black arm from the grasp of Sam Lewis, before any third party could rush in to his support, and the cook stood at bay, his eyes flashing defiance.

"*Diabol* what for all dis?" he asked, backing into his citadel and seizing his tormentors.

"Why don't you lay hold of him, you lubbers?" gasped old Ben, who was struggling to rise, but half doubled up with pain from the "butting" operation he had undergone.

This was very good advice, no doubt; but was not easy to follow, the enemy having great advantages of position, which he seemed determined to hold.

"Gi' me that handspike!" said Sam Lewis, half frantic with rage, to one of the boys who was looking on. "Gi' me that, and I'll fetch him."

But as he received it from the boy, a heavy potlid met him full in the forehead, knocking both him and his weapon into the scuppers. A rush was made by several more, but it was not quick enough. The tall form stood erect, barring the entrance to the galley, and the tormentors gleamed high in air. We all fell back.

The matter was now getting serious. We had set out to 'cob the cook; and thus far were making but a cobbling job of it. But with a sudden crash, the weather-galley door was now driven in, striking old Perez with considerable force upon the back of the head, and he pitched forward with an impetus that sent him right in among us, dropping his tormentors as he fell.

The galley had as usual, two doors, and the weather one had been fastened on the inside. The credit of this manœuvre was due to the infuriated Ben Knox, who, had thus turned the cook's position and taken him in the rear, rushing forward over the fallen door to complete the victory. Now was the moment for a general attack, and the poor Portuguese was overwhelmed by numbers, and forcibly dragged to his fate. Plucky to the last, he disdained to cry out for help, though he might, by so doing, have raised an alarm and brought the officers from their dinner.

Panting and helpless in the grasp of many strong arms he was bundled bodily along the deck to the windlass-end, over which he was curved head downward on one side, and feet on the other. He was held down in this attitude by main force, while old Ben Knox armed with a thin barrel-stave swung it high over his head, and brought it down with all his power of muscle across that part of the cook's body which was thus elevated to receive the blow.

"One!"

A hurried step was audible from the quarter-deck, and the mate's face appeared as he came past the try-works.

"Avast there! What's going on?"

The habit of obedience to constituted authority is strong with sailors, and always has its due effect in well-regulated ships. At the words "Avast there!" the whole programme was changed, and all hands looked at the captain who, with the other officers about him, now made his appearance on the stage.

"What's the meaning of all this?" asked Captain Hathaway, "Cobbing the cook, eh?"

"Yes sir," responded old Ben, whose tongue was loosened, now that he had a chance to reply to a direct question:—"See here, sir, would you like such seasoning as *that* in your chowder, sir, if it was your case?" And he held aloft the old black pipe, as if to say, *that* provocation would justify anything, even to mutiny.

"Did you find *that* in your chowder?"

"Yes sir, I fished it out of my own pan."

"Well, well," said the old man, who felt good-natured after dinner, and whose dinner, by the way, was not served up from the same copper as ours. "It's bad enough, I'll admit; but its dropping into the chowder was an accident that might have happened to anybody else as well as to old Perez. There's fish enough left, and you can begin anew, and have another chowder—but don't let me see nor hear any more of this sort of work." His tone was now firm and decided. "If there's any cobbing to be done in this ship, I'll do it myself. Go to your duty, now, all of you. Cook, be off to your galley, and cook them another chowder, if they want it—without any pipes or tobacco in it."

There was no reply to be made to this, and we all went away to nurse our wrath.

Old Knox by reason of his lame stomach and short wind, and Sam with his broken head, had special reasons for cherishing unpleasant memories of the little episode; while the Portuguese himself, secret and reticent as ever, cooked another mess as he had been ordered, and cherished thoughts of vengeance.

And now, from this day forward, began a sort of "reign of terror" in the Alaska's forecabin. Dark hints were thrown out by certain alarmists that we were all in peril of being poisoned by the deep and mysterious "Doctor." The contagion spread among us until all were more or less infected; and some "had it so bad" that they confined themselves to a diet of hard tack and sweetened water. The coffee and the "sconce" underwent rigid and suspicious examination; the steward received confidential cautions from one and another to be careful of the key of the medicine-chest; and a "round-robin" was signed and handed in to headquarters, praying for the cook's removal from office. But the old man only laughed at it, and ridiculed all fears on this head. He would answer for the cook, he said, that if we let him alone, he would do as well as heretofore—which he knew was not saying much. No one cared to show any open hostility towards the cook, for our taste of his prowess had not been at all encouraging. But there was a dread and uneasiness upon all hands, which made a very uncomfortable state of things.

It was hoped that the object of our fears would run away from the ship at Tahiti. We had been in port a week before he was given a good opportunity for so doing, by being sent ashore on liberty. Sam Lewis and old Ben were both in the same watch, and were observed to sail in company from the time they landed; for they considered themselves liable to be special butts for the cook's vengeance, and neither of them dared to tackle the giant single-handed. They separated at night, however, as they had made arrangements to sleep at different houses. It was about nine o'clock in the evening when a wherry, pulled by a native boatman, came alongside, and in it was Sam, with his head tied up and smarting with pain, one of his ears having been cut off close to his head! He had ventured out in the evening alone, and while in a retired part of the road, the tall form of

Perez suddenly started up directly in front of him. There was no escape for him; the suddenness of the attack was such, that he had not even time to cry out before he was seized like a pig by the ear, and the next instant, his assailant was off like a deer, bearing the cartilage as a trophy, while poor Sam was left holding on the stump, and in the midst of his agony, giving thanks that his throat was not cut instead of his ear.

We had hardly got Sam's wound dressed and made him as comfortable as the ship's resources would admit, when Knox himself arrived in a little canoe, and clambered, swearing and grumbling, up the side. To our astonishment, he was maimed in the same manner as his chum; only he had lost the right ear and Sam the left. Ben was very drunk, or at least had been before the pain and bleeding had partially sobered him, and was unable to give any account of the circumstances. The last he knew, he lay down to sleep in the back room of a native house, and was woken by the pain of his wound, to find himself minus an ear. There was no one but himself in that part of the house at the time; and the Kanakas had seen no one. The person who had thus curtailed Ben of his fair proportions, must have entered and departed by the little backdoor, and there could be no doubt that both he and Sam had suffered by the same hand.

The cook did not report himself next morning. Not coming on board, he was simply considered as "missing," and as by this time, the captain, as well as everybody else, felt relieved to be well rid of him, nothing was said to the French authorities about his absence for three or four days, when, as we were nearly ready for sea, the captain reported him as a deserter. But he offered no reward for his arrest, and gave the police to understand that he was quite indifferent about any special effort at recapture. The singular circumstances of our two men having their ears cut off, were of course known on shore, but the black was most effectually "missing," for nothing had been seen of him since that night. His manner of revenging himself was truly an odd one, and had in it something characteristic of the African stock from which he came. He had completed his purpose of squaring accounts with his two principal enemies, and was satisfied.

Visiting Tahiti a year afterwards we learned that our man had never been captured. But in a recent skirmish with a mountain tribe which still held out in the fastnesses against the French military power, a gigantic negro, fighting on the side of the mountaineers had been killed, and his body brought off by the troops in their retreat. This man had been noted for his prowess and daring on several previous occasions, and it was made a point of honor to secure his body, though several soldiers were killed or wounded in doing so. About the neck of this black Hercules were found suspended a number of savage trophies, and among the rest, several human ears, all of which seemed to have

been cut from white men. They were naturally supposed to have belonged to French soldiers, who had from time to time lost their lives in previous conflicts. But my mutilated shipmates could have testified whence two of them came, though they might not have been able to identify their own among the strange collection. They both have reason to be thankful that the revenge of Perez did not take a more deadly form instead of this eccentric one—for they can still laugh over their attempt at “cobbing the cook,” as a curious episode in their lives, and a foundation for a thrilling yarn which they well know how to embellish.

COURTING DAYS.

BY FREDERIC HOWE MARION.

THE marsh was full of the little white pimpernel blossoms. Mary Ireton was wading about in there, looking for a ring she had lost. It was apparently a useless search, for she had dropped the ring from a boat a month before, when the marsh was covered two feet deep with water. The tide had flowed out now; the grass and pimpernel were springing strong under the warm May sunshine, and Mary, hoping against hope, went splashing, barefooted, among the blossoms, searching with anxious eyes and a flushed face. No wonder—it was her betrothal ring. And then Mary had had a dream.

It was not a very remarkable dream, but then she could not, somehow, forget it. She thought she was walking along the millstream in the meadows, with St. Cyr, the man she loved. On the hillsides the campons blossomed among the corn, the sky was fair, birds sang around them. Such had been the reality, many a time.

In her dream all was very happy. She believed she had met St. Cyr never to part again. He was talking to her, telling her how he loved her, and planning future happiness, when the millstream came rushing along with redoubled force. She could not hear his words, and suddenly he disappeared from her side. She looked, and saw him walking on the other side of the brawling water, and he was not alone. A tall fair girl, with dark curls curtaining her glowing cheeks, walked with bowed head beside him. She had been crying, and St. Cyr held her hand. Mary called to him, but he did not hear. She tried to cross to him, but the stream foamed up angrily to deter her, and she awoke, crying.

Haunted by this dream, she searched for her ring. St. Cyr was absent, and it was since his departure, while teaching herself to row, that she had lost it. It slipped from her hand, and sank through the turbid swelling water. It had been a family ring, and was rather peculiar—a blood-red garnet embedded in its own gray felspar, and set in the finest gold. A brother of St. Cyr's, long since dead, had sent the ring from America to his lady-love in England.

She was dead when it arrived, and it was sent back to St. Cyr the elder, who gave it to his brother, then a boy, and told him to bestow it upon the woman he married. St. Cyr told Mary this history when he gave her the ring, and she knew he valued it. Now she had lost it, and connected with her dream, the loss seemed ominous. Day and night she haunted the stream until the water receded, and the lake sank to its limits, leaving the low land dry. The ring was heavy, and she thought it might have sank directly at the spot where it fell, and was possibly embedded in the soft earth.

Pools of water were still shining among the flags and grasses. Believing that there was no one to see her, she splashed recklessly among them. Her feet and ankles were bare, her dress was kirtled up, and her soft bright hair falling from under her loose gray hood. She looked prettily romantic. So thought the man standing under the willows, fishing.

He was upon an elevation on the borders of the lake at some distance, but he had a pair of keen gray eyes that discovered the girl with perfect distinctness, and, also, other objects more remote. He saw the little brown house where she lived, the blue smoke curling from it, and the blooming garden before the door. A happy home, a good home, it seemed to be, but one cannot, truly, trust to appearances. Mary's father lived there, and Jean, her old Scotch nurse and general housekeeper, but her mother lay under the churchyard marble.

Mary gave up her search at last. She dipped her little feet in a clear pool, and sitting on a tussock, put on her shoes and stockings. Then she started home, but looking back, she burst into tears.

"Good-morning," said a voice, close beside her.

Before she looked up, it did not strike her as being a pleasant voice. She raised her head quickly, and saw a tall slender man with thin bloodless lips, tightly compressed, keen gray eyes, and light hair turned half gray. He was carelessly dressed in good material, and carried a fishing-rod.

over his shoulder. He was an utter stranger to Mary. She stammered a reply to his salutation:

"Have you lost anything?" he asked, scrutinizing her closely.

"Yes," said Mary, eagerly; "a ring. Have you found it?"

"Where did you lose it?" he questioned, without replying.

"I lost it in the water when it crossed the marsh there; now that the water has gone down, I have been searching upon the ground. Have you seen it?" she asked again.

"No; and you are very foolish to look there for it; it has gone past recall. Whatever is lost in water and whatever is lost in love has gone forever."

Mary's heart, in suddenly sinking, forced the hot blood into her face. She turned away; the stranger followed her.

"You have lost your love-gift, and you have lost your lover. Mind. I tell you it is an omen," he said.

Mary walked on swiftly, with a burning cheek, and he ceased to follow her. When she reached home there was a letter for her from St. Cyr.

"MY DEAR MARY,—I cannot return to Lennox until several weeks have past. Circumstances which I cannot explain detain me. I will write you more at length soon.

"ST. CYR."

Mary tried not to think. It was the only way to escape distress and actual anguish, but a subtle depression haunted her. Unconscious of what she was doing, she searched for the proofs of St. Cyr's love. Upon the bracket in one corner of her room, was a tiny Cupid in the fairest Parian. He had given it to her upon her twentieth birthday, saying that the little god must henceforth be a shrine of hers. That was a year previous, when he was first her lover. Now her table was covered with his books, her garden bloomed with rare flowers he had planted there, a portrait of himself, painted by his hand, gleamed on her from the wall. He had been kind and tender, almost worshipful. She could not remember a look or word of blame, ever. Then why this perpetual fear and grief?

She reread the letter to see if innocent of any fatal meaning; but, as she read, the rustling of the trees sounded like the rushing millstream, and dropping the sheet,

she flung herself upon a couch and forced herself to sleep. Fortunately, she was quite unconscious when old Jean came into the room. The old woman saw the pale face and the crumpled letter.

"Ah, my bairn," she muttered, "marriage and hanging go by destiny."

It was an old saying, and a favorite one of Jean's. She had been a pretty girl once, and had had her own romance. It had ended very sadly, and Jean never spoke of it, save indirectly by trite remarks and wise saws, which showed, in their application, much worldly wisdom.

Mary wondered who the man was who had spoken to her. She met him the next day in the streets of the town, and he bowed. The morning following he passed the windows of her home, and she hurriedly asked her father if he knew him. Brown Ireton looked up slowly from beneath his shaggy brows.

"He's that hermit fellow who lives alone in that stone house up the mountain," he said.

Mary remembered vaguely of hearing a man of eccentric habits, who was little known, and lived alone near the town, spoken of by people at various times, but she had imagined a bent and hoary-headed man, rudely dressed, and unconvertible. His name was Toussaint. Merely this was all any one knew of him.

There was a lecture at the town hall that evening. To divert her mind, Mary went with a girl friend and her brother. As the crowd passed out, after the entertainment, she heard a voice say:

"Is St. Cyr in town?"

"No," said another man, "I saw him yesterday at Hartford. He was riding with a lady."

Mary felt faint, and pressed forward into the pure air. A pair of keen gray eyes peered down into her face.

"Is it not as I told you? Come to my house to-morrow, and I will tell you more."

She saw Toussaint's tall figure in the starlight.

"Will you come?" he asked.

His eyes compelled her to say "Yes."

The next morning, after a night of misery, she remembered her promise. She saddled her bay pony, Barley, and went galloping up the hills. Perhaps Toussaint could tell her more than she had at first thought.

The little gray stone house stood under a jutting rock that projected from the mountain side. She tied her pony, and knocked at the low door. It was instantly opened, and betrayed a home of Croesus-like wealth. The rooms were not large, but entirely beautiful. The walls were of polished rosewood, against which hung magnificent paintings in massive gilt. Rare hothouse vines and sumptuous flowers ran up to the snowy cornices. Carpets of purple velvet lay beneath her feet, and what was not unappropriate, that cool May morning on the high mountain top, a glowing fire glittered through a bronze fender. Toussaint was reading. He still held his book—a copy of Montaigne. He had wicked sinister eyes, but Mary gave that but half a thought.

"What do you want to tell me?" she said.

"I want to tell your fortune," said he.

He placed a small, white, unmarked globe on the table.

"Place your hand upon this," he said.

She did so, and instantly the globe was creased with blood-red lines.

"Red," said Toussaint, with a significant sneer. "You love him—you worship him—you would die for him. Girl, you are a fool! you shall have the reward of fools. See those lines break—not one encircles the globe. He has already left you."

"You lie!" cried Mary, frenzied, and unthinking what she did.

He laughed, mockingly.

"It is bad news, isn't it? The tidings are sharp to bear. They are, indeed."

The girl sprang from the house. She leaped upon her horse, and went tearing down the hill like mad. Suddenly her eyes caught sight of some moving object,

white and scarlet, on the long turnpike below. Something moved her to watch closely. She drew in her horse, and stood breathless.

They came on, the lady and the gentleman, riding slowly, as if in conversation. The lady's palfrey was white as snow, and from her graceful shoulders streamed a scarlet scarf. Her companion was St. Cyr.

Mary Ireton fell from her saddle as if dead. St. Cyr saw her fall. He spurred up the mountain, leaving the lady at its foot. Leaping from the saddle, he knelt down in the grass heath, and ghastly with the thoughts of her miraculous escape, drew Mary Ireton's slender foot from the stirrup. The docile pony, scarcely twelve hands high, stood motionless. He had saved his mistress's life.

He carried her home before him in the saddle. When she could speak, he bent down and kissed her.

"Mary, here is my sister Louise. She is hardly your age, yet a widow."

A young face, full of tenderest pathos, was at St. Cyr's side. It bent to the pillow.

"I have wanted to see you so long," whispered Louise Henrique.

Clasping the beautiful neck, Mary Ireton burst into overwhelming tears.

Not until her courting days were ended did she tell her husband of that painful episode. It chanced that he knew Toussaint's history. He was a wretched man, crazed on the subject of marriage, who long ago had been deceived by the woman he loved.

After all, Mary's wedding-ring was the one she had lost. St. Cyr found it where she had looked for it in vain.

DICK FELTON'S FAITH.

BY BERNICE M'CALLY.

CHAPTER I.

OF Margaret Danley's friends few, if any, would have admitted that she felt a tinge of affection for Barbara Cray, the orphan child of her husband's dead sister; yet all agreed in pronouncing her a benevolent woman. She had readily assented to her husband's proposition to give Barbara a home; but, being childless herself, what was she to know of a young girl's needs? She had fed her, and clothed her, and given her such education as the country schools afforded. Further than this she had not agreed to go. If she ever noticed the girl's slow step and mournful eyes, it was merely to suggest that she might be a little quicker in her movements, if she chose; and as for her always trying to look so sentimentally sorrowful, it was not going to win her admiration. If Mrs. Danley had known of the bitter tears shed in secret over these unkind words, perhaps she would have been more considerate; but she never knew.

Barbara was not beautiful, certainly; yet I speak but the truth when I say that her face immediately enchained the eye of the beholder. There was nothing unusual in her features—in fact, she was quite plain; yet the fact was unalterable that there was a magnetism in her glance, and a certain spell in her smile. Her eyes were dark and lustrous, and her hair was remarkable. It was black as ebon midnight, smooth and glossy as satin, and it lay on her head in bands and braids in prodigal profusion.

The drudgery of the farmhouse had well nigh broken the girl's spirit, as it needed but a glance to show. Her hands were shapely and small, but brown and hard from toil. Her face, naturally fair, was tanned by exposure to sun and wind, for this delicate girl had many a day, with hoe in hand, faithfully followed the plow.

That she was an uncommon child, all the neighbors, and even her aunt, avowed; and, "Don't be moaning like Barbara Cray!" was a frequent rebuke from the thrifty housewife, if she saw her daughter with a book in her hand, or gazing silently

into vacancy, building, possibly, castles in the air.

Barbara was above the average in intellect. Much, too much, doubtless, given to dreaming; she had the temperament, ay, the talent, too, for an author of note, had she been properly educated. This habit of dreamy speculation was inherited from her father, an idle visionary, whose castles never took solid shape or actual form; whose scribbings and attempts at authorship Barbara religiously preserved, and pored over at odd intervals, when the nightwork was finished, and she had procured the nameless blessing of a tallow dip, made on purpose, by her aunt, made with wick so scant and tallow so sparing, that "Barbara's candles" became a by-word on the farm.

As she grew up to womanhood, her superiority to the rude country lasses around was more noticeable still. Elegant in form, she had the carriage of a princess; and her hair was a crown of beauty a queen might have envied. She began to take a certain pride in caring for her complexion. Long sunbonnets she made of gingham which her own labor had purchased; gloves she made of sheepskin which her own hands had prepared; until her face was purely white, and her hands delicate and soft as velvet. Unhappily, Barbara was utterly unsuited to the atmosphere which surrounded her, the circle in which she moved. Hopes and aspirations to which her associates were strangers stirred her breast. Dreams of fame she indulged—dreams of that fame which is only won by that instrument which, in the hand of genius, is mightier than the sword. Poor girl! what wonder if often

"a vague unrest
And a nameless longing filled her breast—
A wish she scarcely dared to own
For something better than she had known?"

The spirit of Barbara's dream was disturbed, not by ghost or hobgoblin, but by a stolid form of real flesh and blood, a huge six feet of masculinity, her uncle's "hired help," Richard Felten—"Dick,"

as he was called by his familiars, but whom Barbara freezingly addressed as Mr. Felton, and who, in the honest simplicity of his nature, called her "Barbara, my girl." Once he had spoken to her confidentially as "Barbara, my dear;" but it was only once, for the flash of scorn and anger that blazed up in the girl's eyes had startled him, and sent him out from her presence in unbounded sorrow and humiliation.

Dick Felton was one of the few men whom we can conscientiously call good. He possessed an uncorrupted spirit, and an honest tender heart throbbed in his breast. He was frank, generous and kind; nor was he a mere dolt in intellect. True, he had but little education, but Barbara herself was not fonder of books than he. And he loved this girl, Barbara Cray, with all his honest soul. She was the very life-blood that stirred. But, alas! for him—I had almost said for her, too—she could not love him. So far, in fact, was she from this, that she looked upon him with actual repugnance. His presence was unendurable to her. She hated him, as girls do sometimes hate the very men whom they should love, who would with tenderest hand smooth their pathway through life, and worship them with a devotion entire. But Barbara could not associate sentiment with the thought of the man who had plowed the corn while she hoed it, or furrowed out while she dropped. Love him she could not; it was out of the question; a *l'impossible nul est tenu*.

But Richard was not easily discouraged. He was determined to get into her good graces. O how the man loved her! I sometimes wonder, in serious moments, whether ever woman in God's fair world was loved more truly than Richard loved this pale-faced girl.

It was a hot day in August, and nearly noon. Barbara had been raking hay from six o'clock in the morning. It was astonishing to see the adroit manner in which Dick managed to keep the girl's side.

"It is insufferable!" thought Barbara.

"It is heaven!" thought Dick.

But his eyes dwelt pityingly on the slight form and flushed face. At length he paused, and, leaning on the handle of his rake, threw his head to one side, in a peculiarly significant manner, and said, slowly:

"Look here, Barbara, my girl! you just throw down that rake, and go over yonder by the spring, where it's cool, and rest, and I'll do my share and yours, too!"

The girl looked up quickly, giving him a glance so kind that Dick's heart—to use his own mental exclamation—almost jumped out of his bosom, and said, hastily:

"You cannot do it, I'm thinking."

"Humph! I rather 'low I am about the one that can. I tell you, my girl, if I choose, I can rake more hay with these two great paws of mine in five minutes than you and me together'll rake in fifteen; because I'm not going to leave you here by yourself so lonesome like. And as long as they've no more pity than to put a wee thing like you in the hayfield, I'm not going to do such mighty licks nohow! and I don't care who of 'em knows it—so please the goodness!"

Barbara could not help smiling at his queer expressions.

"You have a kind heart, sir," she said; "and I will gratefully accept your offer—at least, while I get a fresh drink, and rest a moment."

To say that Dick "made hay while the sun shone" would not express the marvellous manner in which he made that hay fly. He, however, having ever been a cold-water advocate, soon felt a thirst which nothing but a draught from that spring could assuage.

Barbara was sitting with her head bowed on her hand. The flush on her face had given place to a deadly pallor, and, looking closely, Dick discovered that tears were dripping through her fingers. He forgot that he had come to the spring for a drink. He just stood and looked at Barbara, an expression stealing over his face that no one ever saw there before. It was one of awe softened into supremest pity, and around the lips lurked a look of resolute determination.

"Barbara," he said, softly, with an utterly futile attempt to repress the tenderness in his voice.

The girl shivered, but did not look up.

"Barbara, if you have any human pity for me, go to the house; for I would rather some one shot me than to see you crying there that way. O Barbara! O my darling!"

It was useless; try as he would, his mighty love must have some vent.

Still she sat motionless. She did not even speak, to give him the reproof he expected.

"Barbara, do you want me to lift you up and carry you to the house?"

She looked up now in a quick frightened way.

"O no indeed, Mr. Felton?"

"Well, then, you'd better hurry and go; for if you don't, I declare I'll do it!" And the stalwart frame seemed to expand and grow taller in the gaze of the almost petrified Barbara.

She rose quickly. She tried to look angry, but, at sight of the look on his face, anger died in her breast, and she merely said:

"I am sure Mr. Felton would never do such a very absurd thing—seeing that I am as able to walk there as he is!"

With a regal inclination of her head, she walked away very swiftly indeed. If Dick had been well versed in modern poetry, doubtless he would have murmured as he looked after her:

*"The white moon that looks from above,
And the stars, know the woman is mine!"*

But he only said, with an audible sigh:

"She certainly is the nicest girl I ever set eyes on; and I'll marry her—if she'll have me; and if she will not, I'll die a bachelor!"

At dinner time Mrs. Danley said:

"Come and eat your dinner, Barbara, and I will wash the dishes; so you need not stop back when they go out to work."

An ominous *ahem!* sounded from Dick's direction. Every one knew when he cleared his throat in this manner that something of importance was bound to follow; so they all respectfully awaited his forthcoming remark.

"Squire," he said, addressing Mr. Danley, "I've been considerin' all this forenoon, and I've concluded that that child haint got strength enough to rake hay; and I think she'd just as well stay in the house and help her aunt."

A small bombshell exploding under the meat-dish would not have carried more surprise than this remark. Mr. Danley's discomfiture was evident. He glanced at his wife, but her lips were closed with as much stolid determination as Dick dare evince.

"So I just stepped over to the Widow

Goff's and hired her boy Tom—a likely lad he is, too—to take Barbara's place. He's been wanting a job of work, you know."

Farmer Danley dropped his knife and fork in blank astonishment, and ejaculated:

"I think you've taken great liberty! Pray, who agrees to pay this lad? I assure you I will not."

"I calculate he'll be paid, squire," said Dick, composedly.

The other harvesters could with difficulty refrain from giving Dick three rousing cheers on the spot; while that personage ate away with as much indifference as if he had not just made one poor tired heart throb with gratitude unbounded.

CHAPTER II.

MRS. DANLEY had, as she was often wont to express it, "high connections." She had married beneath her, and her family had consequently discarded her.

Her father had been at one time a member of Congress; and if he had not been beaten by an opposing candidate, he would have been governor of the State of Pennsylvania. Still, as Mrs. Danley truthfully remarked, it was some honor even to have aspired to the gubernatorial chair. She had a sister married to a wealthy Philadelphia lawyer. Mrs. Hildebrand, Mrs. Danley's sister, was a mild equable-tempered woman, who had, long years ago, forgiven Margaret, and longed to visit her, but her husband sternly forbade it; and as her daughters, Gertrude and Arabella, grew to womanhood, they shared and heightened their father's aversion to the mention of Margaret Danley's name. But the son, young Frank Hildebrand, indorsed his mother's side of the question. He was the eldest, and was about twenty-one years old. Rumor affirmed that he was a very wild and reckless young man, much given to wine. I can hardly say whether it was strictly true or not. But I do know that he was a very brilliant fascinating young man; that he was welcomed and petted by the first circle, the *bon ton* of Philadelphia.

Mr. Hildebrand was wont to boast that he had never exercised any control over his children, that they had always shown themselves possessed of sound judgment enough to steer their own course aright. Such being the sentiments of their father, when I say that the girls were admired and

esteemed, and that Frank was considered "quite a treasure," I have, perhaps, shown them to be, after all, a rather wonderful trio.

It was one morning at breakfast that Frank demurely remarked:

"Mother, how many aunts have I?"

"Only one, my son."

"Father has no sisters, I think."

"None."

"I'm so sorry! I should dearly love to visit some of my aunts."

"You have no aunts," said Gertrude.

"Where's Aunt Margaret Danley?"

"Not where she deserves to be, by some odds!" said Mr. Hildebrand, savagely.

"In what part of the State does Aunt Maggie live, mother?" asked Frank, heeding his father's remark no more than he did the cat's purr at his feet.

Mrs. Hildebrand made no reply, though it was evident she admired her son's courage.

"Somewhere near Reading, I rather guess," he went on. "I think I'll run down to-morrow and see her."

His mother's eyes flashed with pleasure.

"Going bear-hunting?" sneered Gertrude.

"O no! deer-hunting, sis."

"I always thought there was a weak spot somewhere in your unlucky cranium!" said Arabella, loftily.

The father, having always had such firm faith in his son's sound judgment, laughed, shrugged his shoulders, and said:

"Well, go, if you wish. But I sincerely hope your highly intelligent uncle will put you to plowing, if you do go!"

At the Danley farm things went on in much the same way as usual, save that Barbara was now freed from the galling yoke of outdoor service—freed by the unexampled generosity of her uncle's "hired help," Richard Felton. A change had come over that young man. He became dissatisfied with his station, and resolved to look higher. Moodily sitting in the farmhouse door one evening, after he had driven home the cows for Barbara, he suddenly concluded that he would obtain a better education. He was no mean hand at mathematics even now. He had saved quite a snug little sum of money, amounting to nearly a thousand dollars. A plan unfolded itself in his brain. He would go to a commercial college, learn to keep

books, and obtain a situation in some mercantile establishment. He readily observed that Barbara looked upon him as her inferior in intellect.

"I'll become her equal," thought he, proudly. "*I will marry her yet!*"

Mrs. Danley had gone to visit a sick neighbor. Mr. Danley had gone to purchase cattle. Barbara and Dick were alone. The young girl had come to look upon Dick as a sort of benefactor. She did not like him even yet; but she had ceased to feel that nervous dread of his presence which had formerly so disturbed her. She brought her knitting out on the porch and sat down. Dick had been making a pretence of reading a newspaper, but he threw it down, and reclining against a pillar, gazed into vacancy. The unutterably sad expression of his face touched the girl's heart. He remained so obdurately silent that her ears ached to hear the sound of a human voice.

"I will not speak first," she thought. "What can all the fellow, I wonder! Is he angry?"

Still his lips were as firmly closed as if they were frozen together. An hour passed. Twilight crept up the walk and darkened the shadows of the vines.

At last, "Dick," said she, desperately, "are you never going to say anything?"

He started, a blaze of light flamed athwart his eyes, and a vivid dash of red came up in his face. She had never called him Dick before.

"I was absorbed in thought," he faltered.

"What have you been thinking about that is so absorbing?" asked she, kindly.

"I have been thinking of you—and a few other things," he replied, frankly telling the truth.

Barbara smiled.

"What a very queer person you are!" she exclaimed.

"Barbara," he said, suddenly, "I want to talk to you a little; have I your consent?"

She hesitated. She did not care to hear what he had to say; yet, if she refused, should she ever regret it?

"I think I will hear you," she said, gently.

"Barbara, this is the last time I shall have an opportunity to speak with you, at least for a long time. I am going to Phil-

adelphia, to enter a commercial college. I am not going to pass my life on a farm, though farming is an honorable business. Barbara, do you advise me to go?"

"I do not—know—it is so sudden!" she stammered, as a vision of what her life would be without him rose before her—a life of drudgery, probably unequalled by anything in the past.

Dick moved his position, and sat down on the step at her feet.

"My girl," said he, tenderly, "if you do not want me to go, say so, and I'll give it up. Anything that you bid me, that will I do!" And he took her hand in his.

Poor Barbara! It seemed to her that fate was determined on making her wretched. Why must her only friend be taken away from her? Yet she dared not be so utterly selfish as to object. What right had she to do so? Could she expect him to remain, merely to lighten the burdens of one who could never be aught to him? Moved by some feeling she could not fathom, her bosom heaved, and she wept bitterly.

Dick drew her unresisting head down to his shoulder.

"My dear Barbara, my little darling!" he whispered; "I will not go—no, no, I will not go! O Barbara, I love you! I love you!"

She raised her head. She knew that the man had spoken the truth; that, could she accept this love, it would be the crowning blessing of her life. *But she could not accept it.*

"Dick, my friend," said she, mournfully, "I know that you love me; and it is the great grief of my life that you do, for I can never love you in return. You are the best friend I have. I should sorrow deeply to see you go away; but my advice to you is go—go, by all means. Improve your mind. Do right, and you will be happy; and my prayers shall follow you. But to stay on my account would be very unwise. A century could not alter my feelings toward you. My lot will doubtless be more toilsome when your faithful hands are absent; but you must not, *must not stay.*"

A great and overwhelming anguish swept over the man's soul. He bowed his head silently. The darkness crept closer around, enveloping them. The fireflies came out, the stars looked twinkling down, and the empress of the night serenely shed her light upon them.

Richard Felton raised his head. Some strange light burned in his eyes. He suddenly threw his arm around the shrinking form, and clasped her passionately to his heart. He kissed the pale face and the quivering lips.

"Barbara, my love! Barbara, my love!" he moaned; "how can I give you up? But I must! I must! And yet, my darling, I have faith to believe you will one day be mine. O Barbara! no one can ever love you as much as I do—never, never! Dear Barbara, farewell!"

Before the next day had dawned Dick Felton had taken his departure from the farmhouse; while Barbara slept, and dreamed that she had learned to love him, and that her heart was torn asunder by some cruel separation that must last for aye!

CHAPTER III.

FARMER DANLEY and his wife were much surprised at Dick's sudden departure, and no wonder. He had been with them five years!

"It is strange," said the farmer, looking curiously at Barbara. "I don't know where he'll go to get more than sixteen dollars a month and boarded; and that is what I have been paying him for the last five years. And to leave me just now, in the very busiest season—an ungrateful dog!"

Barbara could scarcely have told what made her face flush so angrily and her heart beat so quickly, as she retorted:

"That is the last epithet I should apply to Dick—ungrateful dog, indeed!"

The sun was sinking behind the western hills. The sultry summer day was drawing to a close. Barbara, tying on her sun-bonnet, started for the cows. If she thought of one who had been accustomed to perform this duty for her, she said nothing about it. She walked aimlessly along, and at last sat down on a large rock beside Squire Danley's millpond. She was utterly dejected—tired, soul and body.

"An iron frame could not endure it," she mused. "Ah, why did Dick go away? Poor faithful Dick!—ever ready to relieve me of my burdens. But I could not love him, O no! I see nothing to live for. Toil from early morn till late at night. Work, work, work! how I hate the word!

The Bible says, 'As thy day is, so shall thy strength be.' But I doubt it—I doubt everything in the hollow mocking universe. Dick's love only is true. I have tested that, and I know it is true?"

Poor girl! she was half tempted to "shuffle off this mortal coil," and have done with it.

"Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurled
Anywhere, anywhere,
Out of the world!"

But remembering that possibly her condition might not be greatly improved by any such rash adventure, she wisely

"Took up her burden of life again."

The shrill whistle of the locomotive across the hill aroused her from her reverie. She rose and walked on mechanically. She had almost forgotten she was hunting the cows.

"Pardon me, madam, but can you tell me how far I am from Jacob Danley's residence?"

Barbara was completely startled. So deep was she in thought that approaching footsteps had not aroused her. Before her, bowing with hat in hand, stood a very handsome young man. He was dressed in the finest of broadcloth; diamond studs flashed from his bosom; a heavy gold chain was fastened in his buttonhole, and extended to his left vest pocket; and an immense seal ring was very conspicuous on the fourth finger of his left hand.

Barbara was too wellbred to evince an atom of the curiosity which overwhelmed her. Bowing gravely, she said:

"The next house on the right is where Mr. Danley lives."

With a profound bow and a "thank you," the young man walked rapidly on. Barbara quickened her pace. Finding it useless to look further in that direction, she returned, and found the cows quietly chewing their cud in the barnyard. Slipping through the backdoor, she gained her own room, where she brushed her hair and put on a clean collar. Then she sank down on the side of the bed to try to collect her thoughts. But just then she heard the old accordion in the "front room" going it at quite a lively rate. It was no earthly tune that was ever invented, and certainly

it was not a heavenly one. It sounded something like a distorted jig commingled with a jumbled-up waltz:

"Who in the world can he be that makes himself so much at home on such short acquaintance?"

She knew that her aunt would need her assistance in preparing supper, so she went to the kitchen, took down her apron, and rolled up her sleeves.

"Indeed!" sniffed her aunt. "Is it possible it's you? I should like to know, Barbara Cray, where you have been."

"There are many things which we desire to know, yet which we never find out," replied Barbara, an ominous glow coming up in her eyes.

Mrs. Danley was a peculiar woman; as long as Barbara made no retort to her innuendoes she flung them at her with insulting frequency. But no sooner did the girl evince a spirit of independence than she forthwith came down from her lofty height, and became quite conciliatory.

"My nephew, Frank Hildebrand, has come," she remarked, pleasantly. "He is from Philadelphia, and seems a very pleasant young man. I should like it if you could manage to make a favorable impression on him, as you might step into quite a nice little fortune—provided you have no foolish liking for Dick Felton."

"Aunt Margaret, I declare I will not—"

"Aunt Margaret, how snug you are here in this old farmhouse!"

There stood Frank in the doorway, his blue eyes dancing, and the corners of his mouth drawn down in a vain attempt to repress a smile. Evidently he had heard the entire conversation. Barbara was standing haughtily erect, her queenly form drawn up to its full height, her great eyes blazing wrathfully. But, try as she would to look dignified, she could not repress a smile at the serio-comic expression of the young man's face.

"My husband's niece, Miss Barbara Cray, Frank," stammered Mrs. Danley, at length.

"How do you do, Cousin Barbara?" said Frank, with charming impudence, crossing the white floor, and shaking hands cordially with her. "I am profoundly glad to make your acquaintance, though our mutual aunt has neglected to state my surname, which is Hildebrand."

For three seconds Barbara looked at him

in cold surprise, then her icy manner melted, and she smiled up at the face which seemed guiltless of imposture, the frank, pure handsome face.

Mrs. Danley was in an agony. To cook, with so fine a gentleman looking at her, was impossible. *She could not have found the flour barrel.*

"Barbara," she gasped, "take your cousin into the other room and talk to him, and I'll get supper."

It is not wonderful that Barbara Cray should be fascinated by the young man's manner. Frank Hildebrand was a person of no great decision of character, as it needed but a glance at the flexible womanish mouth to tell. And when I say that life held nothing half so sweet for him as a dangerously fascinating flirtation, I have told his history.

When they were seated at the table a letter was handed to Mr. Danley, which had been brought from the office by some friendly passer-by. Without any apology he hastily tore the seal. He unfolded the letter, and a twenty dollar greenback dropped out. He jumped up, unmindful of his city guest, overturning his chair in the operation, and made his exit through the back door like a flying meteor, and with the pale glow of the dying sunset illuminating the page, read:

"*SQUIRE*.—There is one thing which I entirely forgot to mention to you; and I take the five minutes before the train is due to acquaint you with it. I enclose twenty dollars, with which you will please hire the Widow Goff's son to perform Barbara's share of the out-door service on the farm for this season. If the expense should exceed this amount, do not fail to let me know, as I stand ready to foot the bill. I will write you on my arrival in Philadelphia, giving you my address.

"In haste, R. FELTON."

"Well, I do declare! Well, upon my word!" was all the farmer said. But the widow's son was engaged, and Barbara's bondage was ended.

It is scarcely worth my while to enter into the details of Frank Hildebrand's course of action. The reader will doubtless understand much when I say that the end of October found him still lingering at his Aunt Margaret's. Barbara Cray had

been a surprise to him—first a surprise, then a study, and finally an enigma. But I am sure that he loved her with as much earnestness as a man of his peculiarly selfish temperament is capable of loving anything besides himself; and he would have married her but for the stern, bitter, relentless opposition of his family. Even his mother was appalled at the idea. His father said, "The day you marry her I will make my will, and it shall contain" this clause: 'To my son Frank I bequeath one dollar;' and from that hour your name shall never be mentioned within these walls."

And Barbara? Is it wonderful that she should love him? I say it would have been more strange if she had not. She loved him with the strength of a passionate heart whose tranquil depths had never been stirred before. There was a magnetic spell about this girl that chained Frank to her side—he could not get away. To have seen them together, you would have supposed that he worshipped her with a devotion entire; nor would you for the moment have been far wrong. He wandered by her side through the long lanes, in the quiet September evenings. He read Tennyson to her. His eyes dwelt lovingly on her face, while he recited to her the lines:

"Sweet is true love though given in vain, in vain;
And sweet is death which puts an end to pain:
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I."

"Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be;
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die!"

"Sweet love that seems not made to fade away,
Sweet death that seems to make us loveless clay,
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I."

Before he went away he gave her the book, with his favorite Italian motto, "*Amor tutti equaglia*," pencilled on the flyleaf.

October's frosts had tinged the leaves with fantastic colors; and from the trees they shimmered down, falling with a half-shivering sigh, as if, though inanimate, they realized that they must rise no more forever; that for them no kindly voice could chant *Resurgam*. The lovers stood beneath a gigantic elm, and watched them silently as they fell. Frank had received that morning an absolute command from his father to return to the city. "If you

do not come *immediately*," wrote the irate sire, "I will contrive a plan to bring you!"

"I am going home to-morrow, Barbara," he said, at length.

The girl closed her lips to keep back a cry of pain at the sudden announcement.

"My darling," he said, tenderly, putting his arm around her, "it is useless to say that it grieves me to part with you. Barbara, it crushes my very heart! it kills me!" And he strained her slight form passionately against his breast, and bowed his face down to hers. Poor Frank! he loved her, there is not a doubt of it—not one!

"I cannot leave you! I cannot part with you! Barbara, my precious love! my queen, my treasure! O Barbara! go with me as my wife! I will not go alone! Dear love, go with me!"

Frank was thoroughly in earnest. Fortunately, Barbara had the more sense of the two. She told him it was impossible; that he could return soon; that she would certainly marry him some day. So Frank sadly took his departure, and Barbara wept bitter tears of anguish over the separation that was to be so shortlived.

Amare simul et sapere ipsi Jovi est non datur!

CHAPTER IV.

My story has lengthened itself out strangely. I had intended to tell it in two chapters, and here I am engaged on the fourth! But I ought not to be expected to chronicle the most important events in three human lives in less than four chapters!

As I have said, it was the last of October when Frank went away. He was to return in two months; and in the meantime he was to write twice a week. True to his promise, he wrote—four letters. Then they ceased, and *Barbara heard from him no more!* The letters which he wrote were full of hopeful love, assuring her of the rapture with which he looked forward to the time when he could again clasp her in his arms, again gaze upon the face so loved. In the generality of cases there is a falling off, first in the warmth of the letters, and then in the number of them, until gradually they cease; and the recipient is more or less prepared for such an issue. But the last letter Frank wrote ex-

ceeded the others in passionate expressions of endearment. Frank—weak heart!—knew when he wrote it it would be the last. Had the ardor of his passion cooled? I think not—else, why write at all? Her suffering, I am convinced, would not have been greater had she never heard from him once; and his being, as I have intimated, an utterly selfish nature, I feel safe in asserting that had his ardor cooled, he would not have written at all.

Reader mine, let me tell you, there is nothing under God's fair heaven so cruel, so utterly devastating to the human heart as a vain love. Bitter it is to feel, day by day, that your idol is becoming estranged; that a fairer face than yours has attracted the eye, another has usurped your place in the affections. But doubly bitter is the agony when the blow falls unexpectedly; when the being you have trusted next to God, whom, as firmly as you believe in Heaven, you believe to be faithful and true, proves to you, either by prolonged and aggravated silence, or by coldness and indifference, that he is utterly false—I ask you candidly, can you think of anything more calculated to crush the heart?

Barbara had loved Frank Hildebrand so deeply, so entirely! Mines of gold, the wealth of the Indies—ay, of this round world of ours, could never purchase a love like that! Fatal indeed was the hour when he consented, for a few paltry thousands, to fling it away! fatal to himself morally—disastrous in every single particular. It was the one pure love of his life, his last hope, his only salvation. Heaven pity him! And Heaven pity, in the last grand assize, the judgment day, those who, by their relentless decree, hurled him forward with frightful impetus down that slippery well-travelled path that leads to destruction!

Weeks rolled away, bearing to Barbara not one word of the false-hearted man to whom she had unwisely given her life's fondest devotion. False-hearted, I said, and I repeat it. False-hearted he must have been, or he would have trampled his father's gold beneath his feet! Understand, in all I have said explaining the reason of his falsity, I call it nothing but falsity still.

We are tired of reading in novels of the unfaithfulness of man, and the consequent suffering of woman. Now, right here let

me tell you, I am relating a story of real life—in short, a true story. It has almost become a stereotyped thing for the lover to prove false, and the unhappy young woman who trusted him to pine in solitude, grow pale, and very likely die; or, possibly, revive, recover—in plain English, get over it, and marry some one else. Well, now, I can't help it if it has become stereotyped. The truth is the truth, and I, for one, can't make anything else out of it!

"What!" you say, "did Barbara grow pale and drag out a weary existence, just because a worthless fellow loved gold more dearly than he did her? Humph! I should not have done any such thing. I should rather have considered it a good riddance, and should have congratulated myself on the timely *expose* of his falsity!"

Why, bless me, reader, so should I! But don't you know there are few persons on this mundane sphere who are possessed of our sound, practical, philosophical common sense? More's the pity! Don't you think so?

Six months passed away. How Barbara managed to drag through those dreary winter months she never knew. Truly, hope deferred maketh the heart sick. At the end of six months she received a letter postmarked Philadelphia. Dare I attempt to describe the nameless thrill of rapture that for one moment caused her heart to stand still? With trembling hands she tore the seal, with rapid eyes she glanced down the page. Now whose signature do you think was at the bottom?

"Very truly yours,
"RICHARD FELTON."

Her disappointment was so cruelly intense that she crushed the letter in her hand, threw it into the kitchen stove, and, with a hard cynical smile, she watched it crumble to ashes.

Another month passed away. June, with her perfect coronet of leaves, reigned mildly grand o'er God's fair creation. Barbara started out one evening for a walk. She seemed to be in quest of something, she knew not what. Forgetfulness, I think. But that was about as far off as ever. The linnnet, swinging on the bow, sang mockingly:

"Frank! Fr-ank! Fr-a-n-k!"

The millwheel churned slowly out:

"Frank Hildebrand! Frank Hil—Frank Hil—Frank Hildebrand!"

She retraced her steps, and entering the gate, closed it, and leaned listlessly against it, gazing into vacancy.

"Hullo, Barbary!" shouted a rough farmer's lad, abruptly reining in his saddleless steed at the gate. "The pos'master give me a letter which he said as how 'twas fur you. I can't read writin' myself, but I caculate it's all right." And away he galloped, singing lustily:

"If you git there before I do,
Look out fur me, I'm a comin' too!"

There could be no possible mistake this time. It was Frank's bold careless handwriting. The girl's heart gave a quick palpitating throb, and a suffocating sensation passed over her. She stood a moment erect and motionless, gazing at her name on the envelop. Then she tore the seal; and here is what she read:

"MY DARLING,—I am ill—probably dying. Come to me without delay. O Barbara, my own precious love, beloved of my soul, will you cruelly let me die without ever again seeing your dear face? You will not refuse to come? Sweet love, in agonizing suspense, I am yours till death.

"FRANK HILDEBRAND."

That was all, save the name of the street and the number of the house that would find him. I might consume a page or so in explaining why Barbara pursued the course she did, and what good she expected to accomplish, or what she expected to gain. But the fact is, I do not know anything about that; I only know that she went to Philadelphia, that she went alone, and found Frank Hildebrand at his father's house—found him on a bed of sickness, but not, as it chanced, a bed of death. She was welcomed there by the parents and sisters of the suffering man—welcomed with the respect and deference they might have shown a queen; for was not the son and brother tossing in delirium, calling constantly, "Barbara, my darling?"

If there was any human power that could quiet him, let it be brought into requisition, though the heavens fall, or their pride, which was about as stubborn. She followed the anxious mother into the darkened room. O, how her heart bounded as she knelt beside the low couch. She laid her hand on his forehead. He looked at

her, but there was no recognition in that feverish glance. He grasped her hand, crying:

"I thought you were Barbara! But she will not come to me—never again! O Barbara, my darling!"

He went to sleep directly, and the physician said he would awaken conscious. Barbara was in a strange and unnatural state of excitement. Her cheeks burned, and her eyes gleamed like stars. She felt she must have a breath of fresh air. She never thought there might be danger in a young and unguarded woman's venturing on the street alone, so late in the evening. She carefully noted that the name was on the door, and started for a walk.

"Well," you say, "she met Dick Felton, and—"

Don't anticipate me, I beg! To be sure she met Dick Felton—why not? I can tell you, though, she was not thinking of him any more than if he had been at the North Pole. Not but what she might have thought of him, I suppose, if he had been there—but I digress!

"Well, Barbara Cray!"

Did you ever reflect for a moment how much tenderness, joy, rapturous delight a tone of the human voice can express? If you haven't reflected—in short, if you have not heard it, you will never know just how Dick Felton pronounced those words:

"Well, Barbara Cray!"

Barbara stopped, amazed, and looked up at him. His face brightened and brightened with a great and boundless joy. His eyes grew mistily tender, and his firm lips trembled. She quietly laid her hands in his, saying, simply:

"I am overjoyed to see you!"

"Let me accompany you in your walk," he said, drawing her hand through his arm; and they walked slowly on.

Barbara could never tell what spell moved her, but she told Dick the entire history of her life, from the time he left her to the present moment, and even showed him the letter which brought her to Philadelphia. Dick read it; his face whitening, his lips closing firmly together, and his eyes taking on a terrible aspect. He folded it up, and put it in his pocket.

"Gracious heavens, Barbara!" he ejaculated, covering with his other hand the trembling hand that rested on his arm.

A rebuke rose to her lips, but there was something so appalling in his voice that the words died on her lips.

"Is—is he dead yet?" he asked, in a hoarse tone.

"No."

"And you saw him?"

"Yes."

"And he knew you?"

"No."

"Thank God!"

"Why, Dick!"

Richard Felton turned toward her, a look she could not fathom in his eyes.

"Barbara, my girl, I don't think you are aware that it is a *married* man whom you have come here to see. Speak, Barbara—tell me!"

A cry of agony escaped her lips.

"It is false!" she exclaimed.

"False that Frank Hildebrand is married? married to an actress whom he has deserted? He is not a man of much note, but I think all Philadelphia knows that! I can prove it to you in five minutes."

Barbara clung hysterically to his arm.

"I—I believe you, Dick. But, O my friend, I am so wretched!" And swift tears slid down the white face.

For my part, I never blamed Dick for what he did. He just stooped quickly and kissed the quivering lips, and more closely pressed the trembling hand.

"My poor little Barbara!" he whispered, tenderly.

Well, I am pretty near the end of this story, as any intelligent reader can see; and as I did not set out to prove that my heroine was a first-class idiot, I will merely add that she sensibly allowed Dick to take her home; that she married him, and, further still, that she loved him! Which latter change I can't say I thoroughly understand; but, fortunately, that does not alter the fact. And since there are quite a number of things which I cannot rightly fathom, I will close by saying that Barbara is a happy woman to-day, and so am I, dear reader, if you have liked this story!

DISINHERITED!

—OR,—

THE MYSTERY OF THE HEADLANDS.

A STORY OF THE NEW JERSEY COAST.

BY ETTA W. PIERCE.

CHAPTER I.

THE sun was going down across the narrow bay, in a bank of swarthy western clouds. All the day the sky had threatened storm. Here and there, through broken and gusty rifts, flared out a bar of tan-colored flame, streaked with other bars of angry scarlet, like the dabbling of some bloody finger upon the horizon. A raw wind was blowing from the east—shrieking among the rocks of the beach, and dying far out on the sandhills and wild wet marshes, with a weary moan that made the heart ache.

Upon the low lee-shore, dotted thick with fishing-boats, the worn and haggard tide came tramping in, with a hurried thunderous beat, as if it had looked on the face of the tempest somewhere out on the great sea, and fled before it in terror and dismay. A flock of petrels screamed above the bald black cliffs; and out in the offing, in view of the revolving headland beacon, glowing in its turret like a mighty ember, a ship had cast anchor, in the face of the coming storm and night, with sails closely reefed and a narrow azure pennon flaunting from her peak.

A drearier place you could not well have found than that strip of bleak New Jersey coast, with its rocks, and sands, and waters, in endless repetition—the eternal dirging of its winds and sea. A lonesome place, a weird, wild, eerie place, loved by sea-gulls and hardy sunburnt fishermen, and remarkably productive in the matter of bass and barefooted girls.

Up the narrow dark bay, in the deepening dusk, and almost beneath the bows of the ship in the offing, a boat came dancing over the water—a stanch wherry, painted green and white.

"That's a pretty craft!" said old Ben Brainard, laying on his oars as the ship grew nearer, and looking at her sharp outlines with the eyes of a connoisseur. "Well, well, the bay's not ruffled yet. Look at the west, Miss Essie! I've lived on this coast, man and boy for thirty years, and I never saw but one sky like that."

Miss Essie, seated in the bow, facing the weather-beaten old Triton, turned her head slowly and obeyed. Not with the keen sense of finer souls, perhaps, but yet with an admiration that was almost awe. Ben Brainard pulled at his oars again, and watched her from beneath his shaggy brows.

Ah, what a picture she made, under that wild black sky, with her gray cloak fluttering like a banner, in the teeth of the wind, and the glow of the lurid sunset on her face!

It was a small and oval face of opaque white, low-browed and positively colorless, except for the sumptuous carmine of the lips. With such a skin, the great slow velvety eyes should have been black; in place of which, they had but deepened to a purple-pansy color, disguised beneath the sweep of midnight lashes. Her hair, which curled only at the tips, was blown out from beneath her gray hood, streaming in the wind across her face and down to the boat's side, in a torrent of dull dead gold; and, as it streamed, the sunset, flashing through and through its damp and silken waves, touched them everywhere with rings of scarlet fire. It was just the hair that old Ben Brainard had seen the mermaids combing a score of times, on wrinkled moonlit reefs. It was just the face for which another Marc Antony might fling a world away.

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"And when you saw that sky before," said Essica, "what followed?"

Ben shrugged his shoulders.

"Weeping and wailing, lass! The wrecks were strewn all along the coast, from the headland light to Shipping Point."

Essica looked anxiously up the bay.

"What ship is this in the offing?" she said.

"That's the 'Sea-Gull,' from Bermuda," answered the old boatman, "Joe Masters, skipper. It's to be hoped Joe knows what he is about to-night—'taint often he does."

They were gliding past, just beneath the dark bowsprit, and in the very face and eyes of a brown syren, with dishevelled tresses, couchant upon its front, and glaring down upon them, like a Medusa. Up to this time, evidently, the green-and-white dory had not been observed.

"Boat ahoy!"

At that stentorian hail, cleaving the twilight suddenly, Essica cast a startled look up at the brown syren, half expecting to see the wooden lips apart; but no! Medusa still stared with stony aspect—the voice had come from the deck of the Sea-Gull.

"Boat ahoy yourself!" returned Ben Brainard.

Two figures, outlined above him on the gathering darkness, were leaning over the taffrail, looking curiously down upon the wherry—one, Captain Joe Masters himself, in a pea-jacket and nor'-wester; the other, a taller and somewhat handsomer figure, with a heavy travelling-cloak thrown upon his arm, and the red glimmer of a cigar between his lips.

"Where are you bound?" cried the same voice again—the voice of Captain Joe Masters.

"To the Headlands," answered the old boatman.

"Got any room in your wherry?"

"Plenty, thank ye," said Ben.

"Then lay alongside, will you?" said Captain Joe.

"Eh?" queried Ben, gruffly.

"Lay to, I say!" roared the master of the Sea-Gull. "Here be passengers as wants to land to-night at the Headlands, and as will pay you well to row 'em up."

The old boatman peered up at the taffrail curiously.

"How many?" said he.

The answer came with some hesitation.

"Two."

"Who are they?"

"You can ask 'em on the way," answered Captain Joe, tartly.

Ben relaxed his speed a little. He splashed the water absently with his oar, and looked at Essica. That young lady was crushing her tawny streaming hair back under its gray hood with two slender hands, as tapering as a queen's.

"There is room," she said.

"Then," cried the old boatman, tartly, "you can bring along your passengers, Joe Masters."

Shooting close up to the side of the Sea-Gull, the green-and-white wherry lay rocking like a cockle-shell, upon the water. Of the passengers in question, one at least, was not slow to avail himself of Ben's gracious permission; for the tall figure which had been lounging over the taffrail at the head of the gangway, leaped down at once, into the boat. Off went Ben Brainard's tarpaulin.

"Blast me!" muttered the old fisherman, "if it aint Mr. Renshaw, of the Headlands!"

Mr. Renshaw threw his cigar hissing into the water, and sat down in the stern of the wherry, shivering under his cloak—a handsome aristocratic fellow, with long curled mustaches, and a sumptuous air of hauteur and repose.

"As for this 'un," said Captain Joe, from the gangway, as a heap of something dark and heavy was lowered slowly down into the bottom of the boat, between Renshaw and the old fisherman, "he's to be left at Moll Darke's tavern, if he ever lives to git there—which is safely said. Push off, messmate; it's getting dark and squally."

Ben Brainard sat staring down at his second passenger.

"Good Lord! what's this?" he cried, in dull amaze.

It was a man, in the dress of a common seaman, and wrapped about with a piece of sailcloth. He lay stark and stiff, at the old boatman's feet, his face uplifted, and its hollow glassy eyes gazing blankly up at the darkening sky. A man of middle age, grown gray and furrowed beneath many suns; but so white and spectral was he, so utterly weak, and worn, and emaciated, that no one could hardly trace in him the semblance of anything living and breathing. No voice, no motion, no sign of life—only Renshaw, sitting at his head, heard a groan.

"I am afraid he is very nearly gone," he

said, gravely. "If you have extra oars, my friend, I will help you a trifle in rowing ashore."

Ben glanced obliquely at the hands thus proffered—the handsomest, whitest hands he had ever seen.

"Thank ye," said the old boatman, shaking his head, shyly, "you're not much used to this kind of work, I take it."

Through the cordage of the Sea-Gull a wind came rattling, and swept off across the bay with a low lamentable cry. It was fast growing dark. Out in the west, the tan-colored flame and lurid scarlet had burnt out to dull gray ashes; all, elsewhere, was settling down into blank chaotic gloom.

"A nasty night," said Ben Brainard, with a jerk of his head backward. "Miss Essica, do you see the lights in the 'Three Petrels?' It's to be wished that you were safe there, lass."

The silent figure in the bow never stirred.

"I am not afraid," answered Essica.

At sound of that voice, so widely at variance with the gruff tones of the old fisherman, Guy Renshaw raised his leonine head. Up to this time, I doubt if he had noticed her at all. I doubt if he had been aware of anything more than the actual presence of a fourth party in the boat. Now he opened his dark knowing eyes and stared.

She sat gazing straight out into the night, her face half averted, her damp hair streaming on the wind, her large eyes, with their velvety irises, darkening and deepening as she gazed. Over the rampart of Ben Brainard's broad shoulder, Renshaw took in the picture, with a long, deep admiring look.

"I say," broke out Ben Brainard, with a little motion towards the figure in the bottom of the boat, "he's mighty still, sir. Will you have the goodness to see if he's breathing?"

Renshaw withdrew his gaze from the face of Essica Darke, bent down, and touched the sick man with his hand. A moment after the stark frame stirred a little, and one arm that had been lying on his breast fell down at his side.

"Well, well," said Ben, cheerily, "there's life! I've got a flask of brandy in my vest-pocket—perhaps a drop might revive him."

Renshaw took the pewter drinking-vessel which the old man straightway produced, and held it to the sick man's lips. He drank for a moment, feverishly, and quite

as indifferent to the fiery liquor as if it had been water. Then a shudder passed over the stiff limbs. He turned uneasily in the bottom of the boat, and the eyes that had been staring upward, vacant and meaningless, fixed themselves on the two faces above him. Ben Brainard's broad shoulders had quite shut Essica Darke from view.

"Well now, messmate, ye're better, aint ye?" chirrupped Ben, encouragingly.

For answer the sick man heaved a deep breath, caught midway by a spasm of pain which turned to a groan.

"How far are you from shore?" he said.

"A short pull," answered Ben, kindly.

"Lift me up," he implored, "so that I may look."

To them a short way, indeed; to him, ah, who shall say how long? He looked at the intervening stretch of black and seething sea, the low lee-shore, the lights in the fishermen's cabins, the black horizon thickening with rain; then he shook his head.

"I shall be gone, messmate, afore you reach it," he said.

"Pooh, pooh!" cried Ben Brainard, tugging hard at his oars. "Take another pull at the flask. We are going as fast as ever we can—straight along with the tide, too. Pooh, pooh!"

Mr. Guy Renshaw, at this juncture, moved himself, to proffer the aid of his aristocratic hands once more. Ben again shyly declined.

"Do you see that light," he said, motioning across the black waste of waters, "just above the point? That's the Three Petrels, sir. Moll Darke keeps a bright beacon. I'll be there afore the last cloud shuts down."

The sick man had sunk quickly back in the bottom of the boat. His eyes, receding from Ben Brainard's brown face, had fastened themselves on Renshaw, with a hungry searching look.

"Were you one of the Sea-Gull's passengers?" he said, hurriedly.

"Yes," answered Renshaw.

"Yes," again.

"Well, sir, you can see that I am going fast."

Renshaw's handsome arrogant face softened.

"My poor fellow, I am afraid you cannot last long," he answered.

The poor gray dying face contracted slowly.

"I've got something on my mind, sir, worse than all the pain—something that's been there, like a dead weight, for years; and I can't die until 'tis off."

"Lord!" said Ben Brainard.

"And," continued the sick man, his sunken eyes lighting strangely, "if you'll give me another drink from that flask, sir, I'll try to tell you, before my breath is gone, what I've never told any living being on God's earth, from that day till this!"

Renshaw held the flask again to those palling lips.

"Well, well," muttered the old boatman, with a startled face, "here's Miss Essica!"

Renshaw could see her, even without looking up—the rich flutter of her hair, the half-parted red lips, the great velvety eyes, turned upon him now, and slowly dilating. Then he said, despairingly:

"The man is dying."

Essica made a quick gesture.

"Do not mind me. Hush! Let him speak!" she said.

He had raised his hand and put the flask quickly away. The falling eyes, filling up with a sudden pain—a vague remorseful look, fastened themselves again on Renshaw's face.

"Are you listening, sir?" he said, wistfully.

"Yes," answered Renshaw.

There was a long-drawn sigh.

"I wasn't born in these parts," the sick man began, "and I wasn't brought up to follow the seas; but I had a roving turn of mind, and I took to it as nat'rally as a duck to water. It's just fifteen years ago, this night—I've tried to forget the date, but I never could—that the brig 'Reindeer' lay anchored somewhere off this coast, in a bay like this, and I aboard of her—a green hand, running down to Charleston on my first trip. I have never been anigh this part of the country since, and I couldn't tell the place if I should see it. The night that I'm speaking of was dark and starless, so that when I went ashore the most that I could see were the lights in some fishermen's cabins built along the beach, and the old tavern where we went, up among the sandhills. There were two of us together from the Reindeer, and we went in and sat down by a driftwood fire, in a little bar-room, where some fishermen were playing two-handed pitch, and a young woman stood behind the bar mixing punches. A

handsome young woman, with a red handkerchief tied about her head, and red hoops of gold in her ears, and a swarthy skin; and she was singing, as we entered, some such words as these:

"My name was Captain Kidd,
As I sailed, as I sailed;
My name was Captain Kidd,
As I sailed.
My name was Captain Kidd,
And most wickedly I did,
And God's laws I did forbid,
As I sailed."

"You see, sir, that I remember everything about the place, which I shouldn't have done if something hadn't have happened afterward that branded it into me, so that it has been before me always, from that hour till this. Many's the night at sea, when it has been my watch, that I've put my hands to my ears to shut it out; and many's the time I've seen that face looking up out of the waters—here, and there, and everywhere, with the red handkerchief bound about the forehead, and the red gold rings in the ears."

He paused a moment, to take breath. Renshaw and the old boatman looked at each other, but gave no word or sign.

"Well," continued the sick man, "it was near midnight, and we had drunk and played cards with the fishermen, and were beginning to think of the Reindeer and how 'twas time to go, when the tavern door opened, and a man came in. He stood a moment on the threshold, in the full light of the driftwood fire; and as unsteady as my head was, his looks struck me as strange enough, both for that place and that time. He had on a horseman's cloak, all Spanish cloth and silk, but splashed with mud and foam about the skirts, as if he had been riding hard, and high-topped boots, with spurs, and a riding-whip, silver-mounted, in his hand. Besides all this, I saw he was a handsome, evil-eyed fellow, dreadful pale about the face, but stepping as if he had been born and bred a king.

"As soon as she had looked well at him, the young woman behind the bar says to my messmate:

"Here, you, Tom Peters—you take yourself off, and that other long-shore-man with you. It's time you were aboard the Reindeer."

"Tom got up at that, and staggered out; and as we passed the stranger, he gave me

a long hard look out of his evil eyes that made me shrink as if a cold wind had struck me; and I swear, at that moment, somewhere beneath his cloak, I thought I heard the cry of a little child!

"Before we reached open air I was sober enough; but Tom had drunk more than I, and was, besides, uncommonly quarrelsome; and we had not gone far when there was trouble between us, and he would not go on; and so I turned and left him, and started off alone in search of the boat. It was long before I found it. I didn't know the coast, as I have said, and I groped about a good half hour before I remembered the smooth and pebbly strip of beach where it had been left. There was no light in the sky, nor along the shore; but when I reached the spot, I found that the boat had been unmoored, and standing up in her, all ready to push off, I saw a man, and walking the sands near by, as if waiting for some one, two more of them, of the same sort, only it struck me at the time, and afterwards, too, that these last hands had the bearing of serving-men, and the first one, of a master; as to that, however, I never knew. It was the work of a moment, sir—I hadn't time to breathe, much more cry out, before they had me, hand and foot. I heard the click of a pistol at my ear.

"'Come quietly,' said a voice, 'and you will not be harmed; but make the least outcry, and—' The pistol clicked in warning again.

"Well, sir, under the circumstances, I thought it was best to keep still. Have me they would; and it was three to one; so I suffered them to pass a bandage across my eyes and lift me into the boat; and then they followed, and we pushed off whither I can't say for I never knew. It was a long row. I sat betwixt two of the men, and they never spoke once the whole way. Somehow, all the time, before my bandaged eyes, I could see the face of that man that had looked at me in the tavern door. I didn't ask where I was going, nor what they meant to do with me. I just sat still and waited. Presently the boat stopped.

"'Come,' said the voice that had spoken before.

"I felt a touch on my sleeve, and then I stepped out with them upon a hard beach.

"'You will walk now,' said the voice again. 'It's a rough way; lay hold of me.'

"Over rocks and sandhills, through marsh grasses and wild pasture-lands, in a circle, I sometimes thought; and, to this hour, I believe I was walking one path. At last there was a pause. The bandage was taken from my eyes, and I saw the flash of a dark lantern, held by one of the men, turned upon a place at my feet, where two stakes had been driven down in a direct line, some six feet apart, near which a shovel and spade were lying, on the wet green grass. With the first glimmer of light, I turned and looked at my companions. No, the man I had seen at the tavern was not there. These figures were all different—all singularly alike in dress, and for their faces—every one was masked! under that starless midnight sky, so dark that I could not see beyond the little spot lit by the lantern. They banded me by an oath never to reveal what I should see that night. Then one of the masked figures raised the spade from the grass and placed it in my hand.

"'Dig!' said he.

"I looked at the two stakes driven into the turf at my feet.

"'What shall I dig?' said I.

"'A grave!' said he.

"One of the men stood close at my side; I could see the light reflected along the polished barrel of the pistol he was holding on a level with my head. I was a brawny muscular fellow, then, but I knew there was no chance of escape for me; so I threw off the jacket I wore, and took the spade from him, and while they stood around me, black and silent, and motionless, I dug the grave."

The narrator paused again, his short thick breath almost choking his utterance. Still no one of those three amazed listeners had a word to say.

"When the grave was dug," he went on, at last, "the bandage was replaced, and I was led over what seemed to be a plot of garden ground, through another circuitous path, unto a door where I heard a key turn in a lock, and entered upon a paved floor, after those three men. Once more the bandage was taken from my eyes, and I looked around. I think the place must have been a porter's lodge in its day; but it had fallen into ruin and disuse. A window was broken; and there were vines growing in the cracks of the walls, and the stones reeked with dampness. In a corner, on the wet

floor, a cloak had been spread, and lying upon it, wrapped about in its folds, I saw the body of a woman.

"There was a wooden box lying at the feet of the body, and a hammer and some nails. They pointed to it, and bade me lift her up and lay her in the box, and nail it down. I thought I should have sunk. I was always a soft-hearted fellow in those days; but the three masked figures closed round me and looked at me with their terrible eyes, and so I took the white blood-stained girl in my arms—and she could not have been dead long, for the body was still warm—and put her into the box; and when I crossed her little hands, white as any sea-foam, I saw upon the finger of the left one a wedding-ring.

"I nailed the lid down over her face by the light of the dark lantern, and my own hands, where they had touched her, were all spotted and streaked with blood. Then I took the coffin on my shoulder, and one of those dark men went before, and the others followed, and I bore her out into the pitch-black night, to the grave that I had dug in the wet green grass.

"They stood around while I lowered her in, and heaped the earth over her. Not one spoke a word, only when I would have made a mound, they started forward and smoothed the dirt off even, and told me how to lay the sods so that no one would know that they had been disturbed. I was so faint and sick I could hardly stand, and when the last sod was laid, I just sat down at the foot of the grave, and something passed over me that was like death.

"What happened next, I never knew. When I came to myself, it was late of a sunshiny morning, and I was lying in my berth, feeling beneath me the motion of the Reindeer, as she went plunging out to sea. Everything that had passed seemed so strange and unreal to me that I wondered if I had not slept and dreamed it all; but I looked then at my hands, and there the blood-stains were, still bright and red, and I felt something heavy in my side, and out of it I pulled a purse, stuffed with gold coin, and a little paper with it that read like this.

"For a night's work. Remember your oath."

"I got out of my berth and washed my hands, first of all, and then I crawled up

the companion-way to the ship's side, and dropped the purse and paper over. Then I went to the skipper and asked for Tom Peters, and how I got aboard. I had been brought aboard, he said, by some men, after midnight. What men? He didn't know. As for Tom Peters, he had got drunk the night afore, and laid down on the beach, and the tide had come up and swept him off. That was all I ever knew."

The dying man lifted himself on his arm, as he paused, and looked long and earnestly at the shore which the wherry was now touching.

"Fifteen years ago this night," he said, "the shore looked like this, and the sky, and the rocks yonder. My God! I've never had that dead girl's face out of my mind an hour since then! I've seen it everywhere, white and still, with the dabbled hair around it. I could never wash away the blood from these hands—it always comes back—I can see it always! I've kept the secret, as I swore to; but I'm dying, now, and I want it known that the girl was murdered, and that those men did it."

Renshaw, who had sat quietly through the whole narrative, holding the narrator quiet, too, beneath the magnetism of his grave dark eyes, now raised his head, and looked about him.

The wherry was just grazing against the sands. They had entered a shallow cove, placid and secure, outside of which the baffled waves roared and buffeted the rocks, and strove in vain to follow. A path, well-worn, led up from the beach, and lost itself among the sandhills. Ben Brainard, his sunburned face pale and horrified, drew in his oars, dripping with a thousand crystals, and flung them into the bottom of the boat.

"Well, messmate, here we are," he said, kindly. "You've eased your mind, and, what's more, you've got ashore."

Not yet. Half supported against Renshaw's knee, the sailor turned his dull eyes slowly along the line of gray beach, darkening and darkening with the night. A change passed over his face.

"I have told you a strange story," he said, feebly touching Renshaw's cloak.

"Very strange," answered Renshaw.

"But, as God hears me it is true!"

"Yes," said Renshaw.

Ben Brainard leaped out of the boat.

"Come, Miss Essie," he said, to the shrinking, shivering figure in the bow. "I'll go for some of the men to bear a hand in helping me up to the tavern with him. He's worth a dozen dead men, yet."

She rose up in the wherry—Essica Darke—and, for the first time, the dying man saw her. The gray hood had fallen back from her face, and out of it her rich hair gleamed, long and tawny, upon the wind. Her face was very pale—the red lips apart, and in the eyes a startled, terrified look.

He saw her, I say—this man. Springing wildly up from Renshaw's knee, with his bloodshot eyes starting from their sockets, he looked at her—one moment, and no more; then his jaw dropped, he hung his arms out, stark and stiff, as if to beat her off. A terrible cry bubbled up through a line of blood and foam gathered upon his lips.

"God in heaven!" he shrieked, "it is she!" And fell back, a dull dead weight, in the bottom of the boat.

They sprang to lift him up. A twilight darker than the twilight around them had settled upon his face. The eyes were closed, the teeth set. Renshaw tore away the rough sailor's jacket, and laid his hand upon the heart beneath. It had ceased to beat. He was dead.

CHAPTER II.

A DREARY road winding away into the wild wet night; a sandy road filled with slimy salt pools, and skirted by strips of black pasture-land, and stunted growths of blacker cedar woods, the whole drenched and beaten beneath blinding sheets of rain; overhead was a low black sky, mingled now with shore and sea, starless and impenetrable, and with no diverging line to tell where one ended or another began. Mr. Guy Renshaw, riding muffled and solitary through the mist and darkness of that road, dropped the bridle-rein on his horse's neck and turning in his saddle looked back.

What did he see that he gazed so steadily with that intensified, long-searching gaze? There was nothing behind him but the blank chaos of the night, and storm, and here and there, a fisherman's light, faint and far among the sandhills. Nothing? Yes. A lonely dark inn down on the rocks

below, a smouldering fire fed with drift-wood; a sandied hearth, and standing upon it in the firelight, the tenuous shape of Essica Darke, wringing the wet from her long wild hair.

Guy Renshaw struck his horse sharply and galloped on.

Home—he had always called it such—the great, grand, gloomy old house to which he was going, though, truth to tell, little enough of his careless wandering life had ever been passed there. At a sudden curve in the road, bleak and rare, and swept spitefully by the rain, a broad patch of light, reflected in widening circles from wet pools and dripping shrubbery, burst out, slantwise and sudden across the gloom. It was a lamp swinging in the wind straight before him, from a tall arched gateway.

"The gods be praised," muttered Renshaw, in great relief; "here we are, at last."

The gate itself stood open, swinging back and forth beneath the lamp. He turned through it into a gravelled carriage-way, flanked on either side by very dense shrubbery.

"As black and grim as ever," he said, looking about him, with a shrug, "the old Bastille! Ah, well! 'tis a sight for sair ee'n' to see it again."

A hand, laid suddenly and with emphasis upon Mr. Renshaw's bridle-rein, had the effect of interrupting this little reverie. His startled horse reared and recoiled so abruptly on his haunches that his rider, good horseman though he was, reeled for the moment in his saddle.

"What do you mean?" ejaculated a voice, smooth and hard as steel, at the horse's head; "do you want to ride over me?"

He stood midway in the drive, the lamp in the arched gateway shining full upon him—a tall, dark, insolent figure, hardly youthful, wearing a Spanish sombrero crushed down over his forehead, and looking out from beneath its brim at Renshaw, with a pair of glittering eyes.

"Take your hand from my rein!" commanded Renshaw, haughtily, all the patrician blood astir.

"In a moment."

"And stand out of the way if you do not want to be ridden down."

"Softly, Mr. Renshaw. This is a bad

night for travellers. You were not expected until to-morrow."

Renshaw had begun to finger his riding-whip in a threatening way.

"Ah—eh?" he said, pausing, a little startled at the recognition.

"And," continued the tall figure, never heeding, "your mother is very ill. It is well that you have come."

His hand dropped from Renshaw's bridle. The latter sat staring down at him, every nerve touched with a subtle creeping antagonism.

"First of all," he said, still haughtily, "who are you?"

The Spanish sombrero was raised—whether in courtesy or mockery, it would have been hard to tell.

"Pardon me," answered the hard smooth voice; "I am only an humble servitor of the house of Brandt—Lennox, by name."

"Then, Mr. Lennox," said Renshaw, starting on as he spoke, "as our ways are different, and as I am in something of a hurry, and as the night is damp, allow me to wish you a very good evening."

Paul Lennox waved his hand gracefully. *It was an elegant hand, sheathed in a buff gauntlet.*

"Adieu, Mr. Renshaw. Commend me to your excellent mother. May we meet again."

Mr. Renshaw did not seem disposed to echo the sentiment, and he went down the gravelled way, under the swinging lamp, and out into the pitch-black night beyond. There he turned once in the wet and windy darkness, and looked carelessly back.

"Ride on, heir of Brandt!" *he said, with a laugh in his throat, "a fair field and no favor. Ride on."*

Obedying this injunction quite as well as if he had heard it, and, perhaps better, Mr. Guy Renshaw was indeed riding on straight up the avenue of trees, and into the stately shadow of Brandt House.

It was a great, grand, irregular house—described not inappropriately as a Bastille by the heir—built of red brick, with stacks of chimneys and gables, and narrow arched windows without end. In the tall east wing, overrun externally with masses of English ivy, a lamp was burning through a half-closed shutter.

Hardly had Renshaw's hand touched the

brass knocker when a bolt was drawn back and the door opened.

"Is it Mr. Lennox?" asked a small elfish voice.

"No, Queen Mab," mimicked Renshaw, shaking himself, like a great water-dog, on the threshold. "It is not Mr. Lennox—confound him! it is I!"

Mab, a little dark kelpie, with two pig-tails of braided hair hanging upon her shoulders, knit her black brows and looked at him, supernaturally grave.

"*Lor! the master?*" *she said.*

Guy flung off his dripping cloak. They were standing in a low dim hall, with a wide circular staircase of black oak, and a single lustre burning in a niche.

"Where is your mistress?" said Renshaw.

Mab pointed gravely to a green baize door opening at the foot of the staircase.

"Is she alone?"

"Miss Edith is with her."

"*Miss Edith—O, Miss Glendening.*"

He pushed open the green door straight-way and went in.

A low room, with windows that reached from ceiling to floor, draped now in folds of purple silk. The carpet was of black tapestry, the chairs and sofas of oak and black damask, polished and sombre to the last degree. There was a mantel of Egyptian marble, upholding an ormolu clock, and some rare vases of spar, and sheltering beneath it that which alone *made the room tolerable—a grate heaped high with glowing sea-coal.*

Reclining in an invalid-chair before this fire, and protected from its immediate heat by a painted Indian screen, sat a lady, in stately black satin, with her thin bloodless hand fallen listlessly at her side. There was a buhl table near by, with a glass and some vials upon it, and a bundle of papers tied with a ribbon.

"Edith," this lady was saying, with a querulous twist in her voice, "where is my vinaigrette? Are you sure Mr. Lennox has gone?"

The young person addressed stood in the red firelight at the end of the mantel, with one elbow resting upon it, looking down into the grate. A person of five or six-and-twenty, dressed in black crape, slight and angular in form, and pale in face, with a low forehead, overshadowed by dead-black

hair, and yellowish hazel eyes under straight black brows. She turned and took the vinaigrette from the sofa behind her, answering in the same breath:

"Mr. Lennox went a half hour ago."

Mrs. Brandt opened her thin aristocratic hands nervously to the blaze.

"How it storms!" she said, after a pause, and shivering. "He will have a most unpleasant walk. Now return these papers to the cabinet, Miss Glendening, and give me the key. My son will come to-morrow."

This last in a tone of unutterable longing.

Miss Glendening, moving much like an automaton, except that her slippers were of list, and noiseless, took the roll of papers tied with a ribbon, and crossing the room to a black oak cabinet in the corner, locked them therein and drew forth the key. Mrs. Brandt watched her feverishly.

"Give it to me," she said.

But Miss Glendening was down on her knees on the black carpet, with the lids lowered over the yellowish hazel eyes, groping along its surface with one flexible dark hand.

"Pardon me, madam," she answered; "it fell from the lock; it has rolled beneath the cabinet."

Mrs. Brandt rose upright in her chair.

"How dare you!" she fired; "that key! Find it at once."

And then she turned and saw Guy Renshaw standing in the doorway, looking in upon the scene.

"My dear mother."

"My dear son."

Miss Glendening rose up from the carpet, with a white heat, like lightning, on her face, and walking to the window, stood apart there until the meeting was well over. An unusually tender meeting, considering that there had never been much love lost betwixt this mother and son. She was a thorough woman of the world; he the fruit of a first marriage not altogether productive of happiness. Truth to tell, neither of Mrs. Brandt's marriages had been happy, and the second had borne no fruit.

They were very like, as far as face and feature were concerned—very like. As he stood over her chair, holding her thin hand in his, with their faces so near, hers white and wan, his nut-brown and haughty, you

might have traced in both the same strong clear-cut outlines, the same dark imperious eyes, the same pride and the same will.

Miss Glendening stood waiting patiently behind the purple window-curtain—she was always patient—straining her ear to catch the scraps of conversation drifting betwixt the two. Renshaw had taken the footstool at his mother's feet.

"I received your letter at Nassau," he said, "and sailed the next day. I was seriously alarmed. You have been very ill?" looking at her.

"Yes," with a long shivering sigh.

"And worried and worn."

She flashed him a quick sidelong look.

"How do you know that?"

"Your face tells me."

Despite her weakness, the mistress of Brandt house gathered herself up, bustling and alert.

"Is it the cares of the estate?" said Guy.

"No," quickly.

"It's solitude, then?"

She shook her head.

"Worse yet, your vagabond son?"

"That is nearer the truth, perhaps," and she smiled faintly. "Guy, stay here now. You have wandered enough. I need you."

"My dear mother!" said Guy, pulling his long mustaches, gravely.

"Moreover, this disease which is killing me, as you see, is liable to complete the work at any time. I am not sure of an hour nor a day."

"Is it really as bad as this?"

"Yes. Look at me, Guy! You say that I am worried and worn. I am, indeed! Sometimes I think I am going mad!"

She was gazing at him in a strange despairing way.

"Mother!" he cried out.

"And there is no help for me. It is part of my punishment to sit here, day after day, dying in sound of this sea, and in the place that I have hated for years above all other places on God's earth."

"Mother!"

She turned upon him quickly.

"I have one request to make of you, Guy. It shall be made now. Promise me, if a time should be when you know that I have wronged you—"

"You will never wrong me. Be calm."

"When you shudder, perhaps, to think

of me—when you are tempted to curse me even in my grave—”

“Hush!”

“Will you not let me speak?” sharply.

He laid his hand on hers, magnetic in its strong and soothing touch.

“You are weak and ill,” he answered; “you do not know what you are saying.”

A smile unspeakably bitter flitted across her lips.

“Do I not?” she murmured; “well, let it pass!”

He did not look at her again for a long time. With a vague foreboding, shapeless as yet, except that it wore the front of

trouble and perplexities, he sat recalling his memory of her as she had been at their last meeting, two little years before. The Hon. Mrs. Brandt, wealthy, handsome, *recherche*. A queen of society—a leader of the ton. If he had never loved her—if she had been to him a fashionable woman always, and rarely a mother, he had, at least, been passionately proud of her; and now, this skeleton that he had found sitting in her place, gaunt, and remorseful, and wild-eyed—could it be that they were one and the same? What possible disease was it that had wrought this work?

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

DISINHERITED!

—OR,—

THE MYSTERY OF THE HEADLANDS.

A STORY OF THE NEW JERSEY COAST.

BY ETTA W. PIERCE.

CHAPTER II.—[CONTINUED.]

Guy rose up from his footstool, pushing it aside. He stood toying with the knick-knacks upon the marble mantel, and looking thoughtfully into the fire, in the same place, and just as Miss Glendenning had stood a half hour before.

"I have been meeting with adventures to-night," he said, suddenly. "My dear mother, who is your friend, Mr. Lennox?"

She started, flashed upon him a sharp suspicious glance. Then the mistress of Brandt House hid her face in her handkerchief and coughed.

"Did you meet him?" with a slight inflection of surprise.

"Yes," said Guy.

"He is a friend of the family—he was Colonel Brandt's friend twenty years ago. He has dined with us to-day."

"Ah?"

"You have heard of him, I am sure—Paul Lennox, from New York?"

"A lawyer?" asked Guy, carelessly, lounging over the mantel.

"Yes."

"Where is he stopping?"

"At some inn in the village."

"There is but one."

"Well, there!"

Renshaw turned slowly about.

"And may I ask," he said, "what Mr. Paul Lennox is doing at a wretched inn in a still more wretched fishing village—miles from New York?"

Mrs. Brandt moved uneasily in her chair.

"How should I know? Some love affair, perhaps. There is a young girl at the inn."

"Indeed?"

"The granddaughter of the woman who keeps it. She has a face that ought to make her fortune."

Renshaw's lip curled with a sneer that he did not repress.

"Men like Paul Lennox do not marry fishers' girls for their pretty faces."

"True," said Mrs. Brandt, palling a little; "yet I have known such things. This Essica Darke, however, has been at the Convent of the Bleeding Heart. She is thoroughly accomplished."

Renshaw opened his dark eyes in a stare of unfeigned amaze.

"And, pray, who has done this for her?"

"The old woman—the grandmother. She is bringing the girl up for a lady—a dangerous experiment for persons in their condition. There! I can gossip no more. Edith!"

At the sound of her name, uttered in that cold imperative voice, Miss Glendenning turned quietly, and glided out into view beneath the shadow of the purple curtain. Renshaw extended his hand—she was a grade above the servants—she was his mother's companion.

"Have you found the key?" said Mrs. Brandt, sharply.

"No," answered Miss Glendenning.

The worn brows contracted.

"That is strange. See that the floor is searched to-morrow before the servants enter. You are growing very careless, Miss Glendenning. Now order in the tea."

Miss Glendenning's yellow eyes flashed through their black lashes. She flushed, faintly, as Renshaw, with a look that was not without its pitying surprise, stepped forward before her, and rang the bell. Queen Mab, with her tawny face and midnight braids, brought in the tea-tray. It was, at best, a silent and constrained meal. The wind roared in the wide-mouthed chimney, and gibbered and moaned in the shutters; and the rain clattered sharply along

the diamond-shaped panes, and through it all, the loudest voice in the grand chorus, wild, and deep, and terrible, rose up the walling of the storm-lashed sea. Mrs. Brandt sat gaunt and ghostly, listening, and sipping her tea in the pauses. Renshaw was moody and abstracted, Miss Glendening silent as the grave. And the little ormolu clock ticked loudly, and the firelight shimmered on the sombre furniture, and on Mrs. Brandt's stately black satin, and crawled along the fine edges of the silver and glass on the tea-tray, and Mab, waiting like a piece of bronze in attendance, arched her black brows at the trio, and yawned furtively behind her finger-tips when Mrs. Brandt did not see.

The ormolu clock struck nine. Renshaw pushed aside his cup.

"Good-night," he said, rising, and taking his mother's hand in his own.

She looked at him, wistfully.

"Stay, Guy! one moment."

So he waited, leaning over her chair. Mab gathered up the tea-things and departed, in the train of Miss Glendening, who, not waiting to be bidden, had glided out, like a dark spirit, and without a word.

As the green baize door swung into place, Mrs. Brandt wheeled her chair abruptly round, and faced the oak cabinet standing in its corner, all flickered upon by the red firelight. She pointed to it with her solemn outstretched finger.

"Guy," she said, calmly, "that is yours—that and what it contains. I should have given you the key to-night, but it is lost. It will be found to-morrow. Do not open it, nor seek to know what it holds until after my death. Then, all will be made plain to you. Promise me?"

"I promise," said Guy, solemnly.

"And, now, good-night."

She looked up at him still wistfully, as he bent over her.

"Kiss me?" she said.

He touched his bearded lips to her forehead. It was the first caress she had asked of him for years.

"Say to Miss Glendening that she need not come in again. I shall ring for the housekeeper. Good-night."

And Renshaw went out.

Miss Glendening was walking in the hall alone. Through a great black shadow cast by the oaken staircase, she heard his step, and came forward slowly, her dark shawl

trailing from her thin shoulders, her eyelids drooping.

"Have you come for me?" she asked.

Renshaw, with a shrug, delivered his message.

"Miss Glendening," he began, falling into place beside her, and walking on beside her through that great black shadow, "how long has my mother been thus?"

"A twelvemonth—perhaps more!" answered Miss Glendening.

"Is this Paul Lennox a frequent visitor?"

"Yes."

"And," carelessly, "he is making love to your hamlet beauties?"

Miss Glendening's eyes flashed suddenly up. She looked at him so long and well, that, with all his sublime self-possession, he colored under the look. It was singular, but when the blood rose to his face, hers grew pale.

"I do not know," she replied; "it is likely enough. You have seen this Essica Darke?"

"Yes," said Renshaw, growing cool at once.

"She is very beautiful?"

"Very."

Then they walked on again.

Out of the shadow, and into the light of lustre in the niche—past a shimmering figure in bronze—past a monkish picture by Poussin, hanging above them on the panelled wall—side by side they walked—those two—he careless, and haughty, and handsome—she watching him covertly with her glittering eyes.

"Ugh!" said Renshaw, "what a dark eerie old place it is! What ails the house? There is something uncanny, I fancy, in its very air."

She smiled.

"Do you remain here?"

"For a time. I am not faithful like you."

How carelessly he spoke! How little he knew the passionate pain welling up into vague rebellion where his words struck. It is hard to remember one has a heart by its aching.

"See," said Renshaw, drawing the curtain loosely back from an arched window at the end of the hall, "this is where we used to read Goethe to my mother two years ago. Do you still read Goethe, Miss Glendening?"

"I—that is, the books are laid away," said Miss Glendening.

"I thought of this window," he said, "when sailing up the Rhine."

"You were very good," answered she.

Then they turned and sauntered back to the foot of the staircase.

"*Bon nuit*," murmured Miss Glendenning, sweeping him a low courtesy. The next moment she had gathered up a handful of black drapery and was flitting away up the wide oak stairs, with the long fringe of her lustreless shawl trailing behind her, like a serpent through the shadows.

Renshaw turned on his heel with a whimsical smile.

"Miss Glendenning," he said, "you are—unique. I am rather afraid of you."

How far he might have been justified in his words it would be hard to tell, if, in speaking, he could have seen Miss Glendenning, herself, standing livid upon the landing above him, and stamping her slender foot in a spasm of rage.

"And this," she hissed through her close-set teeth, "this is all, after two long terrible years! Look to your proud name, lady of Brandt! I am no mate for him—I, a gentlewoman, with blood as red as his own! He will yet mate with meaner!"

In his own chamber that night, swept and garnished for his coming, and lighted by a cheery wood-fire, Mr. Guy Renshaw lounged till long after midnight, sleepless as an owl, watching the fanciful wreaths of his own cigar-smoke, or the yet more fanciful pictures he saw in the fire. Now, it was the tawny hair of Essica Darke, blown long and curling upon the wind; now the stark face of the dead sailor lying in the bottom of Ben Brainard's boat; then Paul Lennox's eyes looked out, evil and bright, through the red coals; and anon, a snaky curl of Miss Glendenning's drapery went dancing off in vapory smoke up the yawning gulf of the chimney; but change as these visions might, one there was among them which returned persistently again and yet again—rising up before him, vivid and clear in all its wild beauty—the pale face of Essica Darke.

"Good heavens!" cried Renshaw, starting up and flinging his cigar impatiently into the embers. "How that wild girl haunts me, to-night!"

There was a narrow gallery running outside his door; he turned the silver knob, and looked out. The clock in the hall below was just striking one. The sharp stroke

seemed cutting the stillness, like a knife. A far-off echo stirred faintly; then all was still again.

Renshaw was retreating back into the chamber, when a sudden glimmer of light, seen far-down the stairs, and moving along the wainscot, arrested him. Some one was coming up, bearing a candle carefully shaded.

A black figure it was, noiseless as a phantom, staring out above the shaded candle into the darkness before her, ghostly and unreal. For years after, he remembered her look. It was Miss Glendenning.

She came up swiftly and silently. He watched the long undulating folds of her dress sweep across the landing, and smelt, for a moment, a faint sickening odor of musk; then the candle-light, and the face above it, went out suddenly. He heard the closing of a door, and, on his own threshold, stood alone.

Renshaw's first thought was one of vague alarm—it was his mother—she was worse perhaps. With him, to think was to act. Rushing down the stairs with quickened breath, he opened the green baize door. All there was still and dark, except for a glimmer of light slanting low from the night-lamp which burned in her sleeping-room beyond, and the regular breathing of the sleeper herself. Renshaw looked around.

The invalid-chair stood by the grate, wherein a handful of embers still smouldered, and touched here and there, with a fantastic gleam, the oak cabinet in the corner, and the buhl table with its vials and medicines near by. Renshaw took up a brass key lying on this table beside a fan of sandal-wood.

It was a plain key, but he eyed it curiously. Then he crossed to the cabinet, and turned it in the lock. It fitted perfectly. With an odd smile, the heir of Brandt transferred the key to his pocket, and confident that all was well about him, went quickly out, closing the green baize door.

CHAPTER III.

DROPPED indiscriminately down upon the shore, among rocks and sands, and racks of fish drying in the sun, where the tide, in storms, swept almost up to the very door—a dark, dingy, weather-beaten inn, indeed, was that of the Three Petrels.

There it stood, in the bright morning sunshine—staring out grimly upon the bay, all in a wrinkle under a brisk salt breeze, and dotted here and there by the slanting wings of a seagull, or a jet of powdery foam, flung upward into the amber sunlight, where the frolicsome waves were tumbling over some sunken treacherous reef. There it stood, with its hospitable jaws wide open to all bronzed fishermen who loved tobacco and bad whiskey, and all unlucky travellers in search of entertainment for man and beast; and there, at its dingy front windows, overhung by a single silver poplar that shook and shivered, and streaked with vague shadows the sanded floor within, Mistress Moll Darke sat upon a wooden settle, with needle and mesh-block, mending nets, and croning a snatch of song softly to herself as she worked.

She was a gaunt woman—this hostess of the Three Petrels, wearing her fifty years well. She had a swarthy face, with fiery black eyes set under thick brows, and a few locks of black hair showing under the scarlet handkerchief bound about her head. Handsome she must have been in her day, but one's day can't last forever.

And, as I have said, Mistress Moll sat in her little barroom, mending her nets, and singing while she mended:

"My name was Captain Kidd,
As I sailed, as I sailed;
My name was Captain Kidd,
As I sailed.
My name was Captain Kidd,
And God's laws I did forbid,
And most wickedly I did,
As I sailed."

The cracked shrill voice dropped suddenly. A faint aromatic scent of cigar smoke came drifting in through the window, simultaneously with a shadow which fell across the sill.

"Good-morning, Mistress Darke!" said the pleasant voice of Guy Renshaw.

He stood leaning against the silver poplar, careless and handsome, looking in at her with those knowing eyes of his, that took in at a glance all that the room contained.

"Good-morning," answered the hostess of the Three Petrels, knitting her black brows.

"That is an old song," said Renshaw.

"It will never be younger," curtly.

"And Mistress Darke, I am sure, has sung it before to-day!"

Something unpleasant she found in his words, and she shot him a quick suspicious glance.

"Perhaps I have. Who knows? Did you come all the way from Brandt House to ask me that?"

Renshaw laughed.

"Not altogether. I came to see the shore, and the bay, and the dwellers thereof. Mistress Darke, where is your granddaughter this morning?"

"Not here."

"So I see."

Framed in the dingy window—a piece of color that would have delighted Rembrandt—Moll Darke crossed on the sill her two bare arms, streaked like bronze in the sunshine, and scowled on the careless young aristocrat without, her face full of smothered fire.

"And what do you want of Essica?" she said.

"Well, really—" began Guy.

"Hist!" flashed Mistress Moll. "I know you! I know your soft words, and your white hands, and your proud blood! You walk this way too often of late—too often for your own good, though you were ten times the heir of Brandt!"

Renshaw opened his dark eyes a little.

"Mistress Darke," he answered, knocking the ashes from his cigar, "you are slightly disagreeable this morning."

"And I warn you!" muttered the woman, raising her sharp forefinger; "remember, I warn you!"

"Which is very good of you, I am sure," said Renshaw, shrugging his broad shoulders; "and in the meantime, be so kind as to tell me whither Miss Essica has flown, and where I may hope to find her."

"She has gone down to the bay," shortly.

"Alone?"

"No," transfixing her needle in the nets, as if they had been something of flesh and blood to pierce and torture.

"*Non di scordar di me*," hummed Renshaw, turning on his heel. "Adieu, Mistress Darke! may you find yourself in a happier state of mind when we meet again."

Still she only scowled at him.

"God keep the time far hence!" she muttered, returning to her mesh-block as

Renshaw went sauntering off down the narrow path leading to the shore.

The tide was ebbing, with soft splashes, from the black feet of the rocks. There was a tinkling of small waves in the hot sunshine, a stately cloud or two clinging to the low blue horizon, and a broad strip of shining beach, uncoiling, like a ribbon, between shore and sea.

Renshaw strolled across the shingles, poking the sprawling crab and starfish with his rattan, and intent upon all sights and sounds of human presence about him. Those, however, were few. Some sunburnt children were at play around a rotting hulk, half buried in the sand, and out upon the bay two or three fishing-boats were rocking idly. Nothing more. Renshaw threw himself down upon the dry brown rocks and waited.

Not long. He heard the dip of oars near by, the sound of mingling voices, and looked up. It was neither the sunburnt children nor the fishermen's boats that he saw now, but—what?

A little dory—a charming snow-white cockle-shell, just grating upon the shining sands below. Erect in the bow, and steadying the boat with an oar, a man was standing, dark and saturnine—Mr. Paul Lennox. But it was not he whom Renshaw at that moment saw. It was a second figure, rising up in the stern—a naiad, perhaps—a spirit of the surf? He might well look twice before he could determine. No, the slender girlish shape, the pale face, with its purple-dark eyes and warm red lips, the soft gray dress, looped above a skirt of scarlet, the wild loose curling hair, the single flash of scarlet ribbon threading its gloomy gold—all these things could belong to no other than Essica Darke.

"Come," said Paul Lennox, holding out his hand to her.

She did not take the hand—she put it by with a gesture that savored of distaste, and, never looking at him, sprang ashore unaided. Like a gourd, Renshaw rose, six feet tall, from the rocks, and lifted his cap.

"Ah, Miss Essica," he said, soberly, "I knew you were here—the ployers told me."

She recoiled a step, wavering and uncertain, and her pale face flushed carmine through its opaque skin.

"Mr. Renshaw!"

"Yes, it is I. Have I frightened you?

Pardon me; and, Miss Essica, if you retreat any further, you will fall down the rocks."

She put out her hand involuntarily, just as a startled child might have done, and he caught it, with a light laugh, and drew her up to his side.

"Now thank me," said Renshaw, arching his handsome brows at her. "No, you will not, I see. You are angry. That was a ruse, Miss Essica. I was afraid the mer-men would carry you off."

"You are very kind," ironically.

"Don't mention it—it is a weakness of mine! Miss Darke, pray what are you hiding beneath your shawl—Pandora's box?"

Poised on a jag of the rock, like some bright-winged bird, some wild and radiant thing out of the heart of a tropic summer, she looked at him askant, with those wonderful eyes of hers, whose black lashes drooped upon a cheek tinged faintly, as a snow-wreath in sunset.

"Here," she answered, with a little stately air, drawing forth a volume of native Italian from beneath that gray shawl, "not Pandora's box, but Mr. Renshaw's Petrarch."

Renshaw stared, then looked loftily agrieved.

"You have not read that book!"

"No."

He made a grimace.

"Bah! what an inhospitable coast! what a stubborn and unreasonable people! And why, may I ask, do you return my books to me unread?"

Her queenly little head grew taller by an inch.

"I forbade you to send them to me."

"Well?"

"Be so kind as to remember it in future. Now, if you will allow me to pass—"

Renshaw drew languidly back, glancing around him with exasperating coolness.

"Where is your friend Mr. Lennox?" he said.

She started violently, grasping at the rocks with one hand, and all the color dying out of her face. She threw a bewildered look over her shoulder, down the rocks.

The dory lolled lazily there at its moorings, the oars were flung down within it; but no further sign of Mr. Paul Lennox was anywhere visible. He had gone.

"I—I do not know," said Essica, catching her breath.

"Not here, at least," replied Renshaw, carelessly. "The tide is out; he has passed around the Headlands, doubtless. Shall we follow?"

With a repellant face, all the soft lines of which had grown cold and hard in a moment, Essica came slowly down from her perch. Hardly noticing this change of mood, although he had good cause to remember it afterwards, Renshaw slipped the volume of Petrarch into his pocket, and walked beside her down the shore.

"Mr. Lennox is a friend of yours?" said he.

"Yes," coldly.

"An old friend?"

"Yes," again. "I have known him for a long time."

Renshaw tossed a handful of pebbles into the receding tide.

"I was at the Headlands five years ago," he said; "it is odd that I did not see you then, Miss Essica."

She flushed. "No, I was at school."

"You have lived all your life in this dreary place?"

"All my life," she answered, bitterly. Except that time at the red convent of which she never spoke.

Pity, they tell us, is akin to love. Was it pity, then, that Guy Renshaw felt, as he loitered along the sands, with all thought of Paul Lennox gone, for the time, and nothing actual but that pale tawny-haired girl, and the sunshine, and the purple hazes, and the blue beating sea? Nearly a month had gone by since the night of his coming to the Headlands. In that time, what had he done?

What, indeed, except to dawdle away his precious hours upon the shore; and haunt the old inn, teasing Mistress Moll at the dingy window, and watching Essica Darke, with his heart in his eyes? Brandt House bored him. It was horribly dull. His mother, growing weaker, day by day, was also more cold and reticent, and Miss Glendenning, odd always, had fallen, of late, into a singular habit of moping in that window recess where they had once read Goethe together, over an eternal piece of crochet work, reminding him of nothing in the world but a large black spider, intent upon her web. What wonder, then, that Renshaw tired of Brandt House?

If, at this time, one had sought to remonstrate with him—to remind him that this easy listless way of drifting into doom was, of all others, the most hopeless—if one had told him then what the end would be, one would have got laughed at for one's pains. Moll Darke might have warned away till the heavens fell, and yet have warned in vain.

So it came to pass, that the two walked the sunset shore together, up to the red inn among the sandhills; and the gulls wheeled, white and shining, overhead, and the small waves clapped their snowy hands, with a sound like fairy cymbals, and gradually some of the pain, and dread, and darkness faded out of Essica Darke's face. And Guy Renshaw, talking as he seldom or never exerted himself to talk with any one, suddenly lifted his eyes, and lo! from afar, rolling down over the silvery beach road, he saw a carriage, drawn by a pair of bay horses, with silver-mounted harnesses flashing brightly in the sun.

Essica saw it, likewise, but as through a glass, and darkly. They had reached the narrow path leading up to the inn, then, and some one who had been standing in the porch, watching from under bent brows the approach of the two, now hastened towards them.

"Happy to see you," said Paul Lennox, nodding carelessly to Renshaw. "Ah, you have found that which I lost. Miss Darke, how did you manage to disappear so suddenly?"

"I did not disappear," she answered, coldly.

"But you ran away, which is quite as bad. I came on to the inn under the belief that I was following in your footsteps. Pray, whom have we here? Mr. Renshaw, your excellent mother, as I live!"

The carriage had stopped upon the sands not a rod distant—an elegant affair, embellished with plate glass, and Utrecht velvet, and French varnish. Half buried among its purple cushions, opposite the stiff black figure of Miss Glendenning, reclined Mrs. Brandt, wrapped about in a magnificent Indian shawl. As the carriage stopped, she leaned forward over its side, and, lifting her gold-rimmed eyeglass, stared at the group before the inn.

Lennox doffed his cap. Mrs. Brandt, with her feverish eyes fixed on Essica Darke, bowed coldly, and then beckoned

Guy with one delicately-gloved hand. He came forward.

"Ugh! what odors of fish?" murmured Mrs. Brandt, flitting her point-lace handkerchief across a very pale face. "Guy, who is that girl?"

"Miss Darke," drawled Guy. "Shall I present you?"

Her thin lip curled.

"What a singular face she has! I never saw but one like it. Pray do you know these people?"

"A trifle," said Guy.

"And how do you amuse yourself here?"

"Shooting seawolf."

"Are they plentiful?"

"Very," dryly.

Mrs. Brandt moved uneasily in her seat, bringing her skirts in sharp contact with Miss Glendenning.

"Come into the carriage," she said, making room among the cushions beside herself.

Renshaw took the seat with an air of resignation.

"And now bid Johnson drive on."

So the glittering wheels went round, and Mrs. Brandt's handsome carriage went rolling away towards Brandt House; and behind, in the little dingy porch of the Three Petrels, Paul Lennox looked after it with a dark glittering smile.

"Essica," he said, softly, "would you like to ride in that carriage?"

She turned her dark eyes fully on him.

"No."

"That is odd. Would you like to exchange this grim little hotel for grand gloomy old Brandt House?"

"No," again.

"Odder still. Well, last of all, Miss Essica, did you see those two women stare at you?"

"I saw them."

Mr. Lennox laughed—a dry unpleasant laugh.

"The one in black—the Glendenning—a moment more, and she would have eaten you. Essica!"

She raised her pale unflinching face calmly. His own grew dark before it.

"There is a limit to all things, even to my forbearance. This Renshaw—he is a fine fellow—none better; but if he brings his handsome face here again—nay, do not look at me like that!—I am quite cool—I threaten nothing, only, as I was about to

say, Mr. Renshaw may find himself regretting, some fine morning, that he was ever born!"

And smiling cruelly down into the flaming eyes uplifted to his own, Paul Lennox turned into the dingy porch of the Three Petrels, softly humming.

CHAPTER IV.

A NARROW gravelled path curved around a grass-green opening, all in a mosaic of shadow and sun, past a belt of gaunt Lombardy poplars, through a thicket of evergreens and sweet flowering shrubs, terminating beyond their fragrant interstices in a gnarled stile, overrun with China roses, and myrtles, and syringas, and loved especially by all great velvety yellow-legged bees.

There was a sound of locusts drumming in the long grasses, the stir of scented leaves, the break of blue waves on the shore, the whirr of insects in the warm odorous air. Beyond the Lombardy poplars, the red brick walls of Brandt House glared in the sun, and a broad terrace, all honeysuckle, and jasmine, and stately white lilies, where two tawny wolf-mastiffs, with a taste for sweets, were stretched out lazily, in the heat and silence.

Through a glass door opening upon this terrace, Miss Glendenning, in her inevitable black, with a scarf knotted under her chin, came down the gravelled path, past the poplars and the evergreen thicket, and stopped at the picturesque old stile beyond. A refreshing picture she made, with her thin frosty face that the sun never heated nor tanned, shining under its smooth dead-black hair, and her floating crape dress and cool flexible hands, crossed, one above the other, on the gnarled old stile. Had her aspect been less chilly, one might have thought of these slippery shining snakes, coal-black their tortuous length, that slip out to bask in noontide heats, with just the noiseless undulating motion of this girl.

With one hand shading the sunlight from her yellow-hazel eyes, Miss Glendenning stood at the stile and peered down the vista opening beyond a mossy wall. A grass-grown path running around it, some sombre spruces growing in rows, and at their end a dismantled porter's lodge, long since fallen to decay, and flaunting with parasites and wild roses.

What there was in the picture to fascinate Miss Glendenning it would be hard to tell; but she stood motionless, almost breathless, gazing at the wall and at the ruined porter's lodge—then her eyes glowed, she traced some imaginary course in the air with her thin forefinger.

"From the bush," she said, softly, and to herself; "across the pastures, in circles and out of circles; over that piece of moor and on here! Yes, it is quite plain, and somewhere in this garden they must have dug the grave."

Whereupon Miss Glendenning got down from the stile, and, skirting the wall by its grass-grown path, went on to the lonely old lodge.

The sunlight fell there, slanting and subdued, the door had long been gone, but in its place, sundry weeds, and nettles, and wild blossoming plants had sprung up, casting a green gloom across the damp discolored floor within. Miss Glendenning, not without some destruction of crape, made her way slowly through this tangled wilderness, and, pausing in the doorway, saw before her, lolling indolently in an empty casement, the handsome figure of Mr. Paul Lennox, with his head thrown back and a Turkish pipe between his lips, evidently in high enjoyment of the breezes, and roses, and nettles, and all. He looked up at the sound of her footstep.

"Miss Glendenning! I am charmed to see you," said Mr. Lennox, airily.

Whether or no the charm was mutual did not appear. Miss Glendenning stood wavering for a moment, and knitting her black brows—the next, she was calm again.

"Charming place, is it not?" pursued Mr. Lennox. "Pray come in. I regret there is no chair to offer you; you look fatigued."

The yellow eyes met his own steadily.

"Do not trouble yourself," answered Miss Glendenning. "I am not fatigued—only surprised. How long has Mr. Lennox preferred this place to Mrs. Brandt's drawing-room?"

Mr. Lennox laughed gayly.

"*Chacun a son goût!* My dear Miss Glendenning, you have a penetration beyond your years. Just look at the sea view from this window. Picturesque, I am sure."

"Very," said Miss Glendenning.

"You see," observed Mr. Lennox, with

a wave of his hand, "this was once the entrance to the estate; but the house has been remodelled, and a road cut at a different point, and, according to all accounts, this lodge has been allowed to fall into ruin, as you observe."

Miss Glendenning looked around on the dilapidated walls, the broken roof and hollow staring casements, and nodded.

"Mr. Lennox, it appears, still finds some charm here."

Mr. Lennox smiled placidly.

"Were I a gallant man, Miss Glendenning, I should tell you it was the charm of beauty and youth, and all that sort of thing; but, begging your pardon, you are no beauty. This is an old haunt of mine—it was an old haunt fifteen years ago. I knew the late owner, Colonel Brandt."

"Indeed!" said Miss Glendenning.

"I may say, in fact, that we were bosom friends," remarked Mr. Lennox, with a disagreeable smile. "Poor Brandt! You have seen his portrait somewhere in the old house, I dare say, and heard of him, too?"

"No!" answered Miss Glendenning.

"Possible? Well, he was a wild fellow—Heaven rest his soul!" said Mr. Lennox, more profanely than piously. "He was killed in a duel, a year after his marriage with the present Mrs. Brandt."

Miss Glendenning stood in the dismantled doorway, leaning back against its rotten woodwork, and snapping off the heads of the nettles outside with her parasol.

"And that was—how long since?" she asked.

"Well, a matter of fifteen years, or more," answered Paul Lennox, carelessly. "The present heir is the child of an earlier marriage; there is no Brandt blood in him."

Miss Glendenning nodded.

"The estates fell—and fine estates they are!—utterly and entirely to the widow. There were no other claimants," said Lennox.

Miss Glendenning looked out upon the gray garden wall and rank shrubbery, her nostrils dilating a little to her slow-drawn breath.

"Where was this Colonel Brandt killed?"

"Eh? In the Bois de Boulogne, Paris."

"And by whom?" steadily.

A fiery streak crossed Mr. Lennox's sal-low face.

"Really, you are getting interested. It

was a sad affair; far be it from me to revive it. Why not question Mrs. Brandt? She is very fond of you."

Miss Glendening looked up placidly.

"What matter? I amuse her. She finds me, to a certain extent, invaluable. Truth to tell, Paul Lennox, I am far less dangerous than you."

"You flatter me," smiled Mr. Lennox. "Pray go on."

"Do you know what I would do," she said, watching him chafe perceptibly beneath her fixed gaze, "were I the mistress of Brandt? I would defy you!"

"My dear young lady," answered Mr. Lennox, lifting his eyebrows, "your frankness is admirable. Defiance is a good thing, but not always prudent. Some people object to it."

The slender parasollette was dealing destruction among the nettles.

"I would do more than that—I would kill you, if need be!" cried Miss Glendening.

"Thank you," replied Mr. Lennox, laughing composedly. "Why do all women wear their hearts on their sleeves? Ah, I see—this handsome young heir! My dear Miss Glendening, does your antipathy for the mother extend also to the son?"

It was a home thrust, and she grew livid. Her eyes, glittering like a cat's in the dark, warned him that he had gone too far. He got down from the casement and came forward.

"Let us not quarrel," he said, lightly. "Allons! Mrs. Brandt will be waiting dinner for us. It is four already. Here is my hand."

But she thrust it aside, and, springing from the old doorway, drew her thin scarf across her face, and went noiselessly off by the path that led around the high gray garden wall.

When Mr. Lennox came sauntering along the terrace a little later, he saw, through a low French window, Miss Glendening sitting at the piano in the grand drawing-room, playing a wild Scotch air. A figure immobile, and betraying nothing in look or gesture—a figure that seemed strangely out of place, too, in that great room, all green and gold, and cool Indian matting, and faint floating scents of roses and jasmine. He passed her by, but she did not turn nor look at him.

The dinner at Brandt was *recherche* that

day. Few there ever forgot it. It was at the eleventh hour, indeed, and Mrs. Brandt was careworn, and beaten, and buffeted; but she was herself, and unconquerable still. The guests were not many. There was a lean, dignified old rector, haggard with much overwork, and his placid-faced lady, who wore glasses, and talked pityingly of the little heathenish fisher-children; and there was Mrs. Brandt's solicitor, summoned thither by request—a little ferret-eyed man, much given to watching Paul Lennox; and there was a charming and select few from Long Brandt—a delegation from Mrs. Brandt's "dear five hundred" butterflies that came beating their wings around her once more, out of the sweets of a life wherein her worn feet would never tread again.

Magnificent was the dining-hall, with its long windows open at either end, hung with lustreless amber silk, undulating crisply in the scented south wind; with its black panelled walls, and its bare, slippery polished floor, and the damask, and Sevres, and silver, and fine linen—and the great oak sideboard, crowded with Venice jars, and plate, and glittering glass.

Mrs. Brandt sat at the head of the board, stately in gray satin and Alençon point ruffles. There was a hectic flush on the wan proud face, and her eyes burned brightly. Paul Lennox, sitting next Renshaw at table, touched his arm.

"Let us see," he began, carelessly, "this is some anniversary, is it not?"

"Yes."

"Yes—that is—of what?"

Renshaw turned with a polite sneer.

"Really," he said, "I supposed you were acquainted with these family affairs."

"This has escaped me," coolly, "unless, indeed, it is the anniversary of Mrs. Brandt's marriage with my late friend the colonel!"

Renshaw bowed stiffly.

"Well, what a remarkable woman it is, to be sure!" mused Mr. Lennox, looking across to the gray satin and Alençon point at the head of the table. "Not many fashioned from that model—which is fortunate, to say the least, for us poor devils of the other sex."

Whereupon Mr. Lennox fell into a gentle reverie over his ragout, which continued uninterrupted during all the clatter of tongues and dishes around him, and the

arrival and departure of fish, and flesh, and fowl. Presently, with the appearance of the long-necked bottles of purple port and *chateau latour*, and the silver dishes of fruits and bonbons, Mr. Lennox grew livelier. It was at this auspicious moment that one of the Long Brandt party, a petite blonde, radiant in vene crape, who had been making eyes at Guy Renshaw throughout dinner, suddenly opened fire upon Mr. Lennox, across Renshaw's glass of port.

"What is this that I hear of you?" she said, with an adorable little laugh. "Lo, the poor Gothamites have wondered and wondered in vain, what fascination there could be down in these wilds of Jersey for Mr. Paul Lennox. The secret is out, at last. Pray, where have you hidden your pretty mermaidens?"

He flushed a little through his fallow skin.

"My dear Miss Van Brun, mermaidens don't require to be hidden; they are naturally timid."

"Does she catch fish?" said Miss Van Brun.

"I dare say, and eats them, too."

"And combs her beautiful green hair on the reefs, by moonlight?"

"With a golden comb."

"How delightful! *Entre nous*, I am told that she is very lovely."

"All mermaidens are."

"Miss Van Brun," interrupted Renshaw, impatiently, "allow me to fill your glass; we are waiting."

The little ferret-eyed solicitor, beaming genially with the *chateau latour* which he had drunk, rose up at Mrs. Brandt's right hand.

"Let us," he said, bowing to the assembled guests, and, as it seemed, particularly to Paul Lennox, "let us drink to many happy returns of this day."

Moved by a sudden impulse, simultaneous with the words of the legal gentleman, up rose the company, also, around the long and glittering board. With a stately grace peculiarly her own, Mrs. Brandt stood at the head of the table, and, for a moment, looked around upon them, one and all. The sun, dropping low in the west, shot through the parted amber curtains behind her, and, curving along the sideboard, dipped, in a single arrowy beam, full into the odorous heart of the wine, held, purple and tremulous, in her hand. But her face above it—O, what a face it was! She raised her hand suddenly, groping, as one might in darkness. "Guy! Guy! Guy!"

A long wild cry, all the smothered love of years bursting, like fire, into it—sorrowful, too, and despairing. Then the glass of wine, never to be tasted by mortal lips, plashed on the polished floor. Mrs. Brandt fell back in her chair.

They sprang to her; they lifted her up—that pale horrified throng, and lo! a guest unbidden had been at the feast—Azrael, angel of death!

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

DISINHERITED!

—OR,—

THE MYSTERY OF THE HEADLANDS.

A STORY OF THE NEW JERSEY COAST.

BY ETTA W. PIERCE.

CHAPTER V.

A SILENT house, with the doors all closed and the shutters down—everything about it in a breathless hush, even to the dull monotonous drip of the rain. A dreary, dreary house it was, standing up among the wet trees, with crape on the brass knocker, and the broad threshold darkened by the trail of the mourning garments following sadly after one who had been carried forth that day to return no more.

Out in a clump of evergreens, under the cold afternoon sky, lay all that was mortal of the mistress of Brandt. A worn heart at rest, a stormy and passionate life over and done. Winding back through the iron gateway, and up the long avenue of trees, dripping, as if with tears, came the long funeral procession, and, with a rustling of crape and bombazine, the mourners gathered in the great drawing-room to listen to the reading of the will.

The rain fell dismally along the terrace; the fountain dropped dismally into its stone basin; nothing but gloom without, nothing but gloom within; Guy Renshaw, the cynosure of all eyes, sat at the window, gazing out on the blank and cheerless day, with a pale apathetic face that had no expression except that of extreme weariness. Miss Glendening, with her veil down, and her black-gloved hands crossed in her lap, sat as motionless and still as a figure in marble. The old housekeeper and the family servants, who had been remembered in the will, occupied the lower end of the room; and Paul Lennox was there, sallow and saturnine as usual, wiping his forehead with a mourning handkerchief; and while some looked at one, and some at another, he looked at all.

Mrs. Brandt's solicitor slowly unfolded

the will. His dull droning voice breaking out on the expectant hush of the room, summoned all eyes and ears to himself. He smoothed the paper nervously with his hand.

"This," he said, raising his voice a little, "is the last will and testament of Elizabeth Brandt. Extraordinary as it seems to me, and as it will also seem to you, it was her earnest desire that it should be executed according as it is written."

Guy Renshaw, in his seat by the window, never stirred. With a little sharp cough the solicitor cleared his voice and began to read. Slowly at first, and tripping upon his words, as if they tasted strangely in his mouth, but growing bolder as he went on. They who listened sat in dumb consternation, staring at the little man, and at each other, as if doubting the evidence of their senses—all, except, perhaps, the one most interested in the matter—Guy Renshaw. He listened, too, but mechanically and uncomprehending. What riddle was this?

A legacy for Miss Glendening, "in reward for her patience and faithfulness;" divers gifts to the old servants for like services; then the bulk of the entire property, all the estates at the Headlands, and everything, in fact, that had fallen to the testatrix at the death of her late husband, was given and bequeathed, unconditionally and entirely, to the heirs of Christine Brandt, and to the heirs of said child forever; of whom the testatrix did most earnestly desire to be forgiven for the past, even as she trusted she had been forgiven of her God.

That was all. From the beginning to the end of the document Guy Renshaw's name did not once occur. What did it mean? To every lip the question rose al-

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most involuntarily; and yet, there was little need. Surely the meaning was clear enough. This: Out under the gray twilight sky, the mistress of Brandt lay in her new-made grave, and beneath the roof-tree that had been hers, and should now have been his, her only child stood—disinherited!

After all was over he rose quickly, and spoke to the solicitor, ignoring both the pitying glances cast at him from all sides, and, worse yet, the faint exasperating smile of Paul Lennox.

Disappointment or chagrin there was none, in his pale proud face—only a grave amaze.

"And this," he said, calmly, "is the last will of my mother?"

"Yes," answered the little lawyer.

"Who and where is the heir referred to?"

"My dear sir, the heir is the child of a certain Christine Brandt, deceased. More than that I cannot now positively inform you."

"And the date of the will?—pardon me, I did not hear."

The solicitor read it again.

"I am satisfied," said Renshaw, calmly.

The date was two months old. Mrs. Brandt's will had been drawn up and signed on the day of Renshaw's return to the Headlands. What did he discern in the matter—accident or design?

So the crape and bombazine, open-mouthed and wondering, began to disperse. The drama of one life was quite played through, and the black twilight was falling. Guy Renshaw, however, had not stirred from his place, neither had Paul Lennox. They were the last left in the great drawing-room.

With a face grown suddenly strong and hard as iron, Renshaw turned from the window where he had been standing, and looked at his antagonist.

"Well," he said, sternly, "are you satisfied?"

"I am, indeed?" answered Paul Lennox.

"Then," rejoined Renshaw, pointing to the door, "begone, and wherever your road may lie in future, see that it does not cross mine."

Paul Lennox's sallow face grew livid. He recoiled a step, then answered smoothly:

"I forgive you. One can afford to be magnanimous sometimes. A disappoint-

ment like yours cannot be borne tamely."

"By what power," continued Renshaw, quite unheeding, "you brought a strong heart like my mother's to your subjection, I do not know, nor does it matter now. The contest, if contest it was, has passed into my hands, and you and I, Paul Lennox, are born foes."

Lennox's clenched hand, fallen at his side, worked nervously; he smiled that dark disagreeable smile of his.

"And yet," he said, smoothly, "I would have spared you many things, if you would have allowed me. First of all, the folly of regarding yourself as the rightful heir of Brandt, and secondly, that still madder folly in which you have been indulging for two months past."

Renshaw only answered with the menace of his eyes.

"The folly," said Mr. Lennox, "of loving Essica Darke! Take care! The grand passion has been a fatal one in the annals of the Brandts—I have known wiser men than you to die of it."

This was too much. A lightning-flash of white wrathful heat leaped into Renshaw's face. He pointed once more to the door.

"Are you going?" he thundered.

Lennox started forward with alacrity.

"I am. Why not? I am glad to oblige you for once. Adieu, my dear sir! You will know to-morrow who the child of Christine Brandt is—adieu, and, as the Scotch say, 'God be wi' you!'"

The door closed on that mocking face and hateful smile; a footstep went sounding off down the long hall, and Mr. Paul Lennox was gone.

Miss Glendening took her tea in the housekeeper's room that night, *distract* and forbidding. The housekeeper herself sat dropping tears on her black bombazine, and eyeing the other through her spectacles, while bemoaning the fate that had fallen on the house.

"What will become of Master Guy now?" she said; "moping in his room, and sending back his tea and toast untouched, and Mat blundering on the stairs, and breaking a china saucer, as would have earned her a round box at any other time. How can the mistress sleep out in her grave this night, after the wrong that's been done? Blood ought to be thicker than water. Christine Brandt, indeed! That dreadful old story raked up again!

And Master Guy, as we always thought would be our master, turned out into the world!"

Miss Glendenning, having finished her tea, rose from the table.

"Did you tell me," she asked, pausing, "that he was in his room?"

"He's come down now, and ordered his horse; though where he can be going on such a night as this, I don't know."

Miss Glendenning stepped out into the hall. At the foot of the staircase she saw the green baize door of the late Mrs. Brandt's room standing ajar, and going up to it silently, she looked in.

Before the oak cabinet in the furthest corner, by the faint light of a lustre, Guy Renshaw stood, turning over sundry articles which he had found therein. He turned them, with an air of expectancy—of disappointment, at last, which made Miss Glendenning hold her breath on her half-parted lips, in a very strange and uncomfortable way. She might have named, I dare say, even at a glance, each and all of those articles. Two or three musty deeds, the old letters, the marriage certificates, and a copy of the will of the late Colonel Brandt—these were there, and others like them; and in the little drawer to the right, Miss Glendenning knew of some rare old jewels lying in their caskets—pearls and diamonds, that had not seen the light for many a day, and a wedding-ring.

But—that was all. What indefinite thing he had been in search of—what word from the dead, he could not, perhaps, have told! but in a sad, almost hopeless way, Renshaw swept the papers back into their drawer, and locking the cabinet, came slowly out. She had died, and the secrets of her stern heart with her, and left him no word!

The great hall was quite empty—some faint stir of garments he might have heard on the stairs, but they were gone in a moment. At the hall door a groom stood in waiting, holding Renshaw's horse. Booted, and cloaked, and spurred, Guy flung himself into the saddle, and rode away down the dark and dripping avenue.

Night was setting in, but the rain had ceased. A blue rolling mist crept over the marshes; the wild and narrow road winding down to the shore, glittering with shining pools; rich, damp earthy scents filled the air.

Just two months before, on a darker and wilder night, he had returned to the Headlands. Before him lay the offing, wherein the "Sea-Gull" had rocked at anchor, and the bay, where he had first seen the strange beautiful face of Essica Darke, and heard that wild talk from the lips of the dying sailor. How vividly it all came back to him to-night! Two months! and lo! all of his life before him seemed blank nothingness now, hardly worth the effort of recall. True it is that this mortal existence of ours is not to be reckoned by months or years—nor, indeed, while we live the agony or rapture of a lifetime in the narrow space of some little hour! Who, at best, shall dare count our lives, except by their toils and triumphs, by their loss and gain?

Below, among the rocks, the hamlet lights began to twinkle. The inn of the "Three Petrels," looking dingier than ever in the wet twilight, winked from its curtainless barroom window, expectant of the brown fishermen coming to smoke their stumpy black pipes in the porch, or under the low eaves, and gossip of the last wreck, and the luck of the boats in the bay.

Guy Renshaw rode straight up to the tavern door in the gathering darkness. No sign of life was anywhere visible about the place. He leaped from the saddle, and dropping his rein loosely, walked round to the little window, shaded by the silver-poplar tree, and looked in.

The same old room—nothing changed. Some vague feeling of relief possessed him as he took in its details hurriedly. The driftwood fire, the sanded floor, the oaken settles, the full-rigged miniature ship on the mantel, the bits of coral, the pink-tipped shells. The fire was burning low, casting fantastic shadows on the wall and the low smoky ceiling, and in a patch of shifting light, hemmed in by the deepest of these shadows, sat Essica Darke, her small hands lying listless on her lap, her small head resting against the faded till of the chimney-piece, and all that shifting light upon her face.

Upon her face, flickering across its marble pallor, in her eyes, hiding dreamily beneath the languid lid; in her hair, changing all its tawny clusters to a dull red gold. For a while Renshaw stood silently looking at her; then he opened the tavern door and went in.

At the sound of that step on the sanded

door Essica Darke started up. But, singularly enough, she did not turn, nor look at him. She drew nearer the chimney-piece, and dropped her arm upon it. A shadow swept over her face.

"Come in, Paul Lennox!" she said, bitterly.

"It is not Paul Lennox?" answered the voice of Renshaw.

He was standing beside her. For the first time she lifted her face. No change crossed it—no color; it staggered him for the moment with its look of utter calm.

"This is most unexpected," she said.

"And untimely—yes."

"Why do you come here—to-night, of all nights—and *here*, the last place in the world where Mr. Guy Renshaw should be?"

He winced a little under those strange searching eyes.

"Forgive me, Essica. I meant only to look at you through that window, and return. I have done so of late; but this night—"

She recoiled a step—he following. Her face grew white to the very lips.

"Stop!" she cried, sharp and imperative.

Their eyes met; slowly, reluctantly hers fell.

"I cannot—I will not!" he broke forth.

"Why should I? Do you not know what has befallen me, Essica?"

Still she waved him back.

"I know that the mistress of Brandt House is dead."

"And that I am penniless—disinherited! That to-night the humblest fisherman in the hamlet is not humbler than I? I leave the Headlands forever. All that future which I had planned for myself here is this night blotted out. Do you know all this, Essica?"

There he stood before her—stately and handsome, his rich dress, his white hands, his aristocratic bearing unchanged—humble, indeed, in nothing but his words.

"Are you mad or dreaming?" she cried.

"Neither! Do not look at me with such wild eyes, girl. Is it unseemly that I should come, almost from my mother's grave, to tell you this? you, who are dearer to me than aught else under heaven? you, whom I love as no man ever loves but once—Essica! Essica!"

The last barrier of pride and prudence swept away! He was down at her feet in the faint firelight, his passionate face up-

lifted to hers, transfigured—ay, and terrible in its love, its unspeakable tenderness, its yearning.

"There is naught between us now, Essica, my darling, my little hamlet girl! You cannot repel me now. You cannot tell me that my place is at Brandt House, and yours here! Yours? O girl, girl, it is in my heart of hearts forevermore!"

Wild with terror, wilder yet with a sort of dumb agony, Essica Darke's face grew. She cast out her hands—her slender childish hands, piteously, and as if to keep his passionate words away.

"Essica, speak to me!" he pleaded.

Her lips parted, but no sound came through them. She motioned him to rise, so imperiously that he could not but obey.

"Essica! my God! speak to me!"

He caught the hands in his own with a fierceness of which he was not aware. The marks of his fingers were left around the delicate wrists. A low bitter cry escaped her.

"I will speak to you!" she said. "I will tell you to go straight from this place, Guy Renshaw, and never look upon my face again! I will beg you—yes, upon my knees, to forgive me and forget me, and to remember that to love me is misery, and shame, and death!"

She raved! How could it be otherwise? How dared she stand up there, so white and sweet, and answer him with such folly? He looked at her in a sort of fierce anger, a mad amaze.

"Essica, you asked me a moment ago if I were dreaming or mad. Both, I think."

"Not dreaming," she answered, "but mad—mad, indeed, to linger here—mad to have come here at all, upon an errand like this!"

Renshaw set his teeth hard.

"Essica," he cried, "read me this riddle! I can see but one solution to it, one only—"

She caught her breath quick, involuntary.

"Paul Lennox!" said Renshaw.

There was no answer. The wind sighed across the tavern windows, poplar leaves stirred upon the pane. Outside, Renshaw's horse neighed loudly. Essica stood with her head drooping against the faded chimney-piece, the thin wavering shadows lengthening around her, and a look in her eyes that made Renshaw's heart thrill with an indefinable pain.

"Tell me," he cried out, flushing darkly, "Essica, before God, tell me if you love that man?"

She lifted her head.

"You shall not ask me," she replied; "neither will I answer you."

"By the heaven above us," said Renshaw, through his clenched teeth, "I will never leave you until I know!"

"Spare me—spare yourself!" cried Essica, shuddering; "has not sorrow enough come upon you already? We are parted, I tell you, as death itself could never part us, forever and forever!"

His face grew as white as her own.

"Essica, you torture me! I implore you to speak! Why talk of parting? What is Paul Lennox to you, girl—what are you to him?"

The answer dropped from her parted lips like a cry:

"I—I am his wife!"

Round and round for a moment the room went whirling. Far off and faintly, as if in a dream, Renshaw saw her white face, and heard those terrible words.

"Girl! girl!" he cried out, wildly. "It cannot be—it is impossible! You—a child—a mere child—his wife! Essica! Essica! say that I have not heard aright!"

"Guy, I have been his wife for five years!"

O that voice! So hopeless, so despairing, sending conviction home to his heart like an arrow's point. The words, indeed, he might doubt, but from that voice there was no appeal. Like one struck by some sudden blow, Renshaw staggered back against the wall.

"Forgive—O forgive me!" cried Essica, brokenly. "I could not tell you, and you would not be warned. Hear me one moment. Father or mother I have never known. To Paul Lennox I owe even this poor home—even the bread that I have eaten from my infancy. Why he has haunted me all my life—why he has been to me, here and everywhere, a constantly encircling power, as relentless as the grave, I do not know—I shall never know, perhaps, nor does it matter now. I was a child, hardly thirteen, at school where he had placed me—God forgive me! I wish that I had died then!—fore-doomed to be his wife from the beginning! That was the reward he claimed for the money lavished upon me and upon Moll Darke—the wretched—

O twice wretched mother, that sold me to such slavery!"

She stopped, her bitter voice dying out in one quick dry sob. Renshaw, with his face averted, and covered by one hand, motioned with the other imploringly for her to go on.

"We were married in secret. All mention of the matter was forbidden me. This is the first time it has passed my lips. I never saw him again till three months ago. I was at school, he abroad. To-day before the world he claims me as his wife!"

Renshaw started up. With one stride he stood before her. His fiery dark eyes blazed down into her own.

"Now you know," she said, firmly, "why it is that you should not remain here—why it is that I now bid you an eternal farewell. Go, and Heaven bless you!"

Her face was half uplifted, its long hair trailing in a golden gleam down the beautiful cheek—like pansies wet with rain; her large eyes shone sadly upon him—never in all her life had she looked so gloriously beautiful.

"Essica," he cried out, fiercely, striking his forehead with his clenched hand, "would to God that I could kill you—that I could strike you dead here as you stand! What saves you from me—do you know? Not your beauty or youth—not because you are the wife of that cursed villain—nothing under heaven but your love for me!"

A hand was laid on Renshaw's arm—a firm and strong hand drawing him quietly back. He turned, and looked down into the swarthy face of Mistress Moll Darke.

"Madman!" she said, under her breath, "so it has come at last! How dare you tempt that child?"

His gesture of abhorrence was not to be mistaken—he shook her hand haughtily from his cloak.

"Do not touch me, woman!" he cried. "Stand back! You! you who would sell to Paul Lennox your flesh and blood for a mess of pottage!"

Gaunt and tall upon the hearth, Moll Darke stood up betwixt the two. Her low retreating forehead, under its flaming handkerchief, and the keen eyes beneath, narrowed and darkened.

"Softly, young master! You are over bold. Flesh and blood of mine there is none, that I ken of, through the length and breadth of the earth. Look at us—are we alike?"

She caught Essica's fair round arm, and drew the shrinking girl out into the broad frelight. A low laugh fell from her lips.

"Look well! That soft white flesh—is it like mine? That pretty yellow hair? Good blood, they say, will show. Come, come, young master! Paul Lennox has a dainty wife, and I have kept her well for him; but she is not of my race, nor of my name."

Renshaw's brow grew black as night.

"What new farce is this?" he cried, sternly.

"One, I trow, that will cost you dear!" derisively. "Shall I tell you who this girl is?"

"If tongue like yours can speak the truth," he answered.

"Let it try, at least," she laughed. "You have heard of Christine Brandt to-day? Yes, and of her child, the heiress of those broad acres, that, but for her, would have been yours now—the highest lady in all the country round. Well, look at her—she stands before you—this love of yours, this wife of Paul Lennox."

Triumphantly she looked at him.

"You swear that this is true?" he said.

"I swear. To-morrow you will hear it from other lips. Now get you hence, Guy Renshaw. The riddle is solved."

Ay, solved indeed! Renshaw went stalking to the door.

"Farewell, Essica! The price of your sacrifice is rich, but not rich enough for this! They who reap it will reap bitter bread. I have loved you above all things earthly—I shall love you to the end."

No answer. Without word or cry Essica Darke had fallen, a white and senseless thing, to the sanded floor. He would have sprang to her, he would have lifted her up, but Mistress Moll waved him away.

"Go!" she cried; "you have done enough—you have broken her heart."

Quick as a flash of light he had caught one hand from the swarthy clasp of the woman, and pressed it to his lips. It was such a kiss as one might leave on the brow of the dead—freed from the taint of all earthly passion, eloquent of nothing but a great despair. One last look cast at the still face; then the door closed; a horse neighed softly; and then, through the night, and the rain, and the darkness, further and further from that accursed spot, Guy Renshaw was galloping away.

NOTHING, they tell us, is ever wholly lost. Yearly the world grows young, the dead rose blooms again, all bright and beautiful things have their time of resurrection. There is no death.

How, then, with these lives of ours—their wasted largesse? How then with the things which might have been, and will never be? Will they, too, live again—the dear joys, lost before fruition, the hopes we never harvested, the glorious possibilities never fulfilled? In the better life to come, shall we find them, like safely anchored ships which forgot to return to us here, from the far reaches of unknown seas?

Ah, who can tell?

Brandt House stood up among its trees, and lawns, and shrubbery, ugly, and grand, and unchanged, although a good twelve-month had passed and gone since we last saw it.

The sea sang its old song on the shore below; the same trees, to all appearances, hummed away socially in the roses and jasmine; the same wolf mastiffs lay sleeping lazily on the green terrace, and at a window above, in a patch of slanting afternoon light, sat Miss Edith Glendenning, crocheting.

What a bright sharp needle she had, and how it flew up and down, and in and out, through those meshes of colored wool! Miss Glendenning's face was still pale, her figure still angular, her dress still black. A few wrinkles had been added, perhaps, to the corners of the yellowish hazel eyes, and the eyes themselves had acquired an habitual downward droop; but otherwise she was Miss Glendenning still.

Some one came dancing along the passage outside, singing a snatch of song as she came, and a bright elfish head was thrust through the open door.

"If you please," said Queen Mab, solemnly, "the mistress says will you come and dress her hair for dinner? Juliette has gone down to the shore."

Miss Glendenning rose quickly. Perhaps she had been waiting for a summons like this. She laid aside the colored wools and the sharp needle, and crossing the passage softly, knocked at the carved rosewood door of Mrs. Paul Lennox's dressing-room.

"Come in," said a languid voice from within.

Miss Glendening turned the knob and entered. It was a perfect *bijou* of a room, all silver and rose-colored hangings, and scented Indian wood, and inlaid tables, and costly knickknacks generally. On a low sofa, piled with cushions, lay Essica, her face turned like a lily to the sunshine, a book slipping down her lap, and her desolate eyes fixed on a blue glint of distant day seen dimly through the window beyond. How well Miss Glendening knew that look! how often she had seen it! A year before that face had been full of subtle promises—and lo! here was the fulfilment—pride, and coldness, and *hauteur*, every white Greek line grown hard and repellant—a child, in fact, transformed swiftly and irretrievably into a conscious woman.

Miss Glendening, standing irresolute on the threshold, coughed behind her handkerchief. The dark discontented eyes turned.

"Ah, it is you!" said Essica, listlessly.

"You sent for me?" queried Miss Glendening.

The book fell from Mrs. Paul Lennox's lap. She rose languidly, and walked to her dressing-table.

"Juliette has deserted," she said; "pardon me, I had no resource but you."

"I am always happy to serve Mrs. Lennox."

Essica sat down before the mirror, never once raising her eyes to the image reflected therein, and Miss Glendening, drawing forth the heavy golden pin that held her hair, suffered it to drop in a torrent of shining gold down over her shoulders—down almost to the tufted floor. What lovely hair it was, and how it twisted, and curled, and clung around Miss Glendening's fingers! She brushed out the silken mass, eyeing it the while like an ogress.

'Twas a pretty task, and easily done. Essica's white hands lay idly on her lap, and Miss Glendening's dark ones worked with a will. Softly she fastened up the last rich coil.

"What ornaments will you wear?" she said.

Essica's lashes lifted.

"None. Or stay—there is a pearl comb somewhere among these trinkets—I will wear that."

Miss Glendening began searching straightway on the dressing-table, among glittering

toilet ornaments, and boxes of sandal-wood, and fans, and chains, and rings, and elegant jewel-caskets, hobnobbing together in the utmost carelessness and confusion. Presently the nervous dark hands were staid. There was silence.

"Have you found the comb?" asked Essica.

Hardly—something in its stead. Miss Glendening was holding in her hand a long blue slender blade—a dagger, in fact, and a beautiful oddity of rare old Italian workmanship—what a singular ornament, to be sure, for Mrs. Paul Lennox's dressing-table! The hilt was of massive silver, surmounted by a serpent's crest, lined at every scale with the eyes of sea-green emeralds; a bright, bristling, cruel hilt, that seemed mocking you in secret and in silence!

Beneath it the long black flung off the sunshine, in a blue dazzle, broken only where the shadow of Miss Glendening's hand fell.

"A pretty weapon," she said.

Essica turned and looked at the dagger, a faint flush streaking her white skin.

"It was the property of the late Mrs. Brandt," coldly, "and brought, I believe, from abroad."

"See!" said Miss Glendening, "where it pierced my hand."

A single drop of blood lay large and wet on her outstretched palm. Immediately after there was a footstep and a low laugh behind her.

"It is dangerous playing with edged tools," said a voice, and Paul Lennox sauntered around Essica's chair, and, in a breath, flung back the sunlight from the dagger's edge by his own broad shadow cast darkly thereon.

"Pardon me for intruding," he began, looking hard at the cold averted face of Essica. "I came as an *avant-courier*—with news."

Miss Glendening had dropped the dagger quickly, and recommenced her search for the missing comb.

"What news?" said Essica, dryly.

"Some that will interest you, I am sure," answered Lennox. "I have been to the hamlet."

Her slender hands stirred upon her lap—a quick rebellion of nerves which she could not quite control, and which his cruel and intent eyes devoured greedily.

"Mistress Moll has a guest at the Three

Petrels—arrived last night from New York—a friend of yours, Essica?"

"Madam," said the voice of Miss Glendening, "I do not find the comb—it is not here."

Essica rose from the dressing-table.

"Well, it does not matter," she said; "let it go. I will not detain you longer."

Inwardly, Miss Glendening was fain to indulge in a little laugh; but outwardly, she bowed, and with a courtesy, not without a spice of mockery, swept slowly by Paul Lennox, and withdrew through the rosewood door, leaving it ajar behind her.

"For Heaven's sake!" burst out Lennox, chafing, as the last fold of her dress disappeared in the passage, "why do you keep that woman here? Why have you had her clinging about you, like a burr, ever since Mrs. Brandt's death? I thought the house would be rid of her then."

"I keep her," answered Essica, haughtily, "because she is useful to me, and, moreover, because she is my friend."

Something in this assertion seemed to amuse Mr. Lennox. He laughed loudly.

"She's a she-devil!"

Essica deigned no answer. Miss Glendening, more generous, stood in the passage outside, with her finger on her lip, and whispered a smiling "thank you!"

"Humph!" pursued Mr. Lennox, toying with the silver-handled dagger upon the dressing-table; "women, as a general thing, are not greatly given to loving their rivals. You have never been aware, perhaps, that you held that interesting character toward Miss Glendening in a little affair I wot of a year ago."

How thoroughly cruel and pitiless the man was! Some of the blue steely gleam of the blade he held seemed reflected in his face. Essica, with crested head, looked at him.

"And is this," she said, "the news that you come here to tell?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Something akin to it."

"Then, indeed, it had best remain unsaid."

"What! so indifferent as that?" he sneered; "softly, my dear wife! Guy Renshaw is at the Headlands!"

She had turned her face away, so that the full effect of this announcement was lost to him. Neither flush nor tremor, that he could see—neither word nor sound,

that he could hear, betrayed that she had heard him. Lennox set his teeth.

"Essica," he repeated, smoothly, "that man is at the Headlands! Be so kind as to answer me—do you know it?"

Something in the tone stung her to the quick. Her eyes blazed.

"I?" she cried; "I know it? How dare you ask me?"

His eyebrows went up, and the corners of his thin hard mouth went down.

"Take care! You are a fine woman, Essica—a true child of *la belle* Christine—a magnificent woman, in fact, but can you deceive me? I think not!"

She answered nothing, only faced him, rigid, and white, and scornful.

"Do you think I do not know that under heaven there is nothing you hold so dear to-day as this Guy Renshaw? Well, let those rave of the grand passion who will—you and I did not marry for love, Essica!" Her lip curled.

"True?"

"But come! what is this?" said Lennox, showing his white teeth. "I have learned to adore you, and you have learned to hate me—that is bad."

"Yes," echoed Essica, recoiling passionately from him, "to hate you!"

Lennox raised the beautiful Italian dagger, and looked at the emerald serpent on its crest.

"The way of the world," he said, with a laugh. "I have righted your wrongs—I have paid off sundry old scores concerning your family honor. I have placed in your possession one of the richest estates in the country—married you, in short, and made a fine lady of you, and you hate me! Bah! what ingratitude!"

"And for whose sake was all this done—yours or mine?"

"Pray forbear!" he answered, waving his hand, gracefully; "such points are always delicate."

She wrung her slender hands.

"O my life!" she broke forth, "lost, wronged, perverted! Could you not have spared me, Paul Lennox—bad and cruel as you were? Had I ever harmed you? Why did you not take the estate, and leave me alone?"

"I could not well have gotten it without you," he answered, coolly.

"It is to me, but the price of slavery—worse, a thousand times worse than death!"

I hate it! What has it ever brought me—but misery—misery?"

She was clinging to the broad casement, her great eyes full of unutterable pain, her thin nostrils dilated, and in her face a shrinking and loathing that perhaps he had never quite comprehended until then. He paled visibly.

"My dear child," he said, "you are going a trifle too far. There is something here needs looking to."

"If I might but know," she went on, "who and what I am—what wretched fortune it was that made me the heiress of this place, and why for me a mother disinherited an only son—surely, Paul Lennox, these things can be no mysteries to you—why will you not, why do you not tell me of them?"

"Really, my dear child," answered Lennox, mockingly, "I have told you a thousand times that you are the child of Christine Brandt."

"Ay, and who was Christine Brandt?"

He looked at her darkly.

"Go and importune the rocks of the sea!" he said; "it will do quite as much good as asking of that story from me."

"Am I never to know?" she cried, despairingly.

"Never—unless, indeed, the dead rise up to tell you!"

Weak and trembling, Essica fell back in the chair from which she had arisen.

"Then pray God that they may!" she said. "There—go now—leave me!" Lennox rose up.

"I hasten to obey you," he cried, kissing his hand to her; "so charming a *tete-a-tete* need not be prolonged. *Au revoir*, Mrs. Lennox; allow me to hope that I shall meet you at dinner."

He lolled out, humming an opera air as he went. Essica, with her head upon her hand, never looked nor stirred; so, nothing but the sunshine missed from that glittering dressing-table the long slender dagger of Italian workmanship, with its emerald crest.

Dinner at Brandt House was remarkably dull that day. There were no guests. Miss Glendenning looked hard at the silky hair crowning Essica's slender head, but found no ornament therein—the pearl comb had not made its appearance. She looked, too, at the face beneath that hair—it was as expressionless as marble. Then

Miss Glendenning sipped her soup quietly. Diamond cut diamond—trust one woman to read another.

The afternoon waned away, sad and chilly. A mist rolled up from the sea, and dropped like a wet gray veil over everything outside the doors of Brandt. In Mrs. Paul Lennox's dressing-room a bright little fire had been lighted, and Mrs. Paul herself came up from dinner, and sat down before it, with its light shimmering on her rich dress and jewelled hands, and all over the charming appointments of the room, but never reaching the desolate darkness of her eyes.

She did not sit there long; some restless spirit possessed her. Now the slender feet were wandering, ghostlike, across the tufted floor; now she stood at the window, with her forehead pressed against the pane, watching for that far-off glint of sea hidden in mist; and once Paul Lennox passed slowly down the gravelled walk beneath, clipping at the roses with his riding-whip, and calling to the wolf-mastiffs on the terrace, who lifted their great drowsy heads, and looked after him, but would not follow.

Paul Lennox disappeared among the wet shrubbery, and Essica, with a long-drawn breath, turned from the window. As the stiff folds of her dress swept across the corner of the dressing-table, something dislodged from thence, white and fluttering, like a bird, and fell down to the floor at her feet. It was a folded paper, tied with a slip of ribbon.

Vaguely wondering, Essica picked it up, wondering yet more when she found her own name written upon the outer surface of the sheet in ink that was hardly dry. It was a woman's writing, somewhat hurried, but remarkably bold and handsome—a writing, in short, characteristic of the writer, for it was Miss Glendenning's.

Essica's first impulse was to ring the bell and summons that young lady; her next, to examine the package more closely, and lo! faintly traced in pencil, beneath her own name, were the following words:

"Do not seek to know how this history fell into my hands. It is neither yours nor mine. I resign it to you, that the things which have been hidden may be revealed. Read."

Trembling with a sudden and indefinable dread, Essica sank into a seat, and loosed

the narrow ribbon. The package opened, and there fell into her lap, not one sheet, but several, enclosed together in an outer wrapping, some yellow and discolored, as if by time, others, bearing the impress of a later date, but all closely written, not in Miss Glendenning's hand, nor in any hand that she had ever seen before.

Like one in a dream, Essica began to read. Brightly the firelight danced across the rose-colored hangings and Indian carving of the room. The sea-mist filtered through the wet shrubbery outside, and clung to the pane like tears; round the old gables the east wind began to moan, like a lost spirit, and presently the twilight settled over all.

Still she sat there, still she read on. Was it some beautiful shape, carved in stone, or a living, breathing woman? Nothing but the mechanical dropping of the blurred and blotted sheets, one by one, betrayed her. She hardly stirred, she scarcely breathed.

Stealthily the dark crept in, gathering first in the corners, and closing silently up to the chair wherein Mrs. Paul Lennox sat. The ivy at the lattice was shaking the wet tremulously from its leaves. Outside the howl of the wolf-mastiffs rose up drearily. Surely so sad a night had never settled down on Brandt before.

Then the last word was read—the last sheet fluttered mockingly from Essica's rigid hand, and in the fast-gathering darkness, she started up, with one sharp fierce cry. Great God! Could it be a reality? the black horror that had girted her suddenly? Stunned, bewildered, she looked around. Yonder was the window, and beyond it the deepening night; and Essica stood there, staring blankly, with the fatal papers strewn around her, and mid all chaos of that poor sick brain of hers, but one thought—one purpose developing itself, fixed and unalterable, and that thought and that purpose was—flight.

[CONCLUDED IN NEXT NUMBER.]

DISINHERITED!

—OR,—

THE MYSTERY OF THE HEADLANDS.

A STORY OF THE NEW JERSEY COAST.

BY ETTA W. PIERCE.

[CONCLUDED.]

CHAPTER VII.

MR. PAUL LENNOX, when on the gravelled walk beneath Essica's window, he called to the wolf-mastiffs on the terrace, and they refused to answer to that call, ground his fine teeth in a spasm of savage rage. In all the months he had been at Brandt, he had never made a friend, neither in stable, kennel nor servants' hall. This fact, to say the least, was significant.

He crossed the lawn moodily. The air was thick and damp, but full of summer perfumes. I doubt if Mr. Lennox did not find a certain pleasure in the sudden darkness that was closing up the day. There is something rebukeful always in God's blue sky and sunshine, to the heart that is harboring a dark or evil deed.

He walked with a quick uneven step. The broad paths were quite deserted—a dead hush reigned everywhere among the rank rich shrubbery. Now and then a bird fluttered in some thicket, or the drone of the tide rose up from the rocky shore, but that was all. He crossed an old stile overhung with roses and jasmine, and beloved of Miss Glendening in previous days, and skirting a mossy wall beyond, emerged at last to the point, where a year before an old tumble-down porter's lodge had stood, with empty casements facing the sea. But the spirit of renovation had been there, and the desolate old ruin had disappeared. In its place a stone Triton stood, flinging from a curved shell showers of liquid crystals into a stone basin beneath, and some young sycamores planted at the edge of the fountain whispered weirdly in the wind.

Paul Lennox passed the Triton by, never deigning it a glance. The path swerved

abruptly here, and beyond its final bend he beheld his destination—the most singular, perhaps, that one could have imagined. It was a small enclosure, circled round with clumps of evergreens, through which a shaft of Italian marble rose white and solemn towards the sky—the grave of Mrs. Brandt. With a footstep that lagged almost unconsciously, Lennox approached the iron gateway opening into the place. It stood ajar. He bent down, and looked closely at the walk beneath. There was a print of fresh footsteps on its damp gravel. Half crouching upon the ground, himself hidden by the long branches of the evergreens, and one hand clutching hard on the iron railing, Paul Lennox peered through.

It was a low mound, closely shaven—no bud or blossom there, but the long star-grasses waving at the corners of the enclosure. The shaft of marble at the head of the grave had a name and a date, and nothing more. Verily, she slept the good sleep alone and forgotten.

Forgotten? Flung down at the foot of the grave, Paul Lennox saw a wreath of fresh *immortelles*, and kneeling there with uncovered head, a figure tall and bearded, the face turned towards his own—a handsome face, but thinner and sterner than when he had last looked upon it—with streaks of gray in the rich hair, and deep far-seeing eyes—the face of one, in short, who had tasted of life's bitterness, and fought its hard fights—Guy Renshaw.

Like a wild creature watching its prey, Lennox sank down lower and lower behind the evergreens, glaring out from their ambush on that solitary and unconscious figure, with a look in his eyes such as no

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mortal ever wears but once. In it was mirrored the last turning-point of human destiny, the dark and final surrender of a soul to evil.

He lay there a long time, sometimes half erect, sometimes face downward in the grass; but always with one hand clasped hard over something which he carried in his breast. Finally Renshaw rose up from the grave. The night had begun to fall then. He cast one long yearning look around—the exile and alien—then crushing his hat over his brow, turned slowly and walked away.

At the first clang of the iron gate, Lennox started up also, white, almost breathless. Already that swift figure was fast disappearing in the mist and shrubbery. Toward Brandt House? Ah no! but the narrow road winding away to the shore below. With a bound Paul Lennox cleared the low railing and followed in pursuit.

The road lay gray and lonely, shut in by the mist. Guy Renshaw, absorbed in his own thoughts, followed its turnings mechanically, never looking back. Now and then a footfall echoed behind him on the soft soil, but without exciting either interest or attention. He had forgotten the bitter Present in the bright alluring Past. Ah, if we could but cease to love when we had ceased to hope! if the madness of passion could but find an antidote in its own despair! But no! all else may depart, yet Love must live forever; and the hardest of all earthly lessons ever learned by these weak human hearts of ours is to forget.

He thought of her with a wild and intense longing, as he might have thought of the dead; and dead indeed, she was to him. He thought of her dark eyes, of her red lips, of her beautiful hair—goaded himself over and over again with a thousand vain sweet memories. Wife of Paul Lennox she might be, and happy or miserable, she dared not question which, but he had loved her once, and to men like Guy Renshaw, to love once is to love forever.

It was dark when he reached the inn of the Three Petrels. Tea was awaiting for him in Mistress Moll's little sitting-room, and Mistress Moll herself stood in the porch, peering anxiously through the mist.

"Humph! so you have come at last, young master?" she cried, sharply; "and where is that other man that was crossing the shore with you?"

Renshaw started.

"There was no other."

"But there was," answered Mistress Moll, tartly. "I saw him at your back in a lifting of the mist not a moment ago. Some fisherman going down to the cove. Well, come in, young master, come in!"

Renshaw drank his tea in the homely parlor of the inn that night, lingering long over the board, while the brown burly fishermen gathered as usual in Mistress Moll's barroom and under the eaves outside to gossip the evening away. Presently Renshaw rose up and stepping out into the porch, lighted a cigar. The mists were slowly breaking. The lamp of the light-house on the point shone like a Cyclop's eye, and already the silver ring of the watery young moon peered out above the poplar tree to the west. A hand was laid on Renshaw's arm. He turned and saw Mistress Moll Darke wrinkling her dark face above his shoulder.

"Bide here young master," she said; "never leave the inn to-night."

He smiled.

"Mistress Darke, I am but going, for courtesy's sake, to smoke this cigar upon the shore."

She griped him passionately by the sleeve.

"Nay nay, not to the shore! You have been on a bad road to-day—the road to Brandt. It bodes you no good."

"I have been to my mother's grave," he answered, calmly, drawing his cloak about him; "can that bode me evil?"

She fell back wavering and uncertain, and in the meantime, Guy Renshaw had walked off down the narrow path leading to the sands.

The tide was rolling in against the foot of the rocks—he could see the white surf-lines flashing ghostlike in the darkness. With his hands crossed behind him, his head upon his breast, Renshaw went pacing back and forth across the slippery shingles.

Never had the song of that sea seemed so mournful and so solemn. It was like a dirge. Renshaw listened in a sort of dreamy fascination. His cigar burned slowly out to ashes, and the tip of the mournful moon sank further and further westward, till it rested on the rim of the low horizon. He had left Time for an hour, and touched upon an Eternity.

He might never tread that shore again—

who could tell? This visit to the Headlands had been to him a sort of fatality, impossible to resist. It was a farewell visit, too. He had come to look his last upon the places that had known him—upon all the old pleasant and familiar things. On the morrow he would go abroad, to return, perhaps, years hence, or—never.

With these thoughts uppermost in his mind Renshaw paused in his walk at last, and leaning against a jagged rock, looked off upon the far reach of sea.

"What a sobbing surf!" he thought; "and how strangely mournful this night seems."

Suddenly a fragment of the rock against which he leaned, dislodged somewhere from above, rolled down with a crash, and fell upon the wet sand below. Renshaw started and looked up.

There was a smothered oath; a breath hissing bet through furious teeth, swept his cheek; and in that last moment, there flashed confusedly on his sight a couchant figure outlined against the darkness above him; then something steely and bright swooped suddenly downward in the last light of the sinking moon; and Guy Renshaw without a groan or cry, had fallen face downwards upon the sands.

* * * * *

Half an hour after the lighthouse lamp still shone, the stars were out thick and luminous, and the white waves still broke easily on the shore. Then there arose a sound as of flying footsteps near by, and something came flying and panting along the beach like a wild doe when hounds are on her track. A woman's figure clad in gray from head to foot, with a face whiter than the surf-lines.

O tender pitiful night! hide her and shelter her. O swift feet—flying whither?—your path is barred now, for yonder a dead man lies in the way! Some drowned sailor, perhaps, gone upon the voyage from whence there is no return. Let us see.

A tiny bauble lay upon the sands at the stark feet of the lady. She stooped and picked it up. It was a dagger with a silver hilt, rough with emeralds, and clotted and streaked with blood. At the sight all her panting labored breath grew still. Quick as thought she had cast herself down by the body, and lifted his head, and turned to the starlight his still white face. Then a cry, so wild, so terrible, that the very sea

might have fled affrighted from it, rung over the rocks, and that gray figure had raised the heavy head to her knee, and lifted her fair hands above it, and stretched them piteously to heaven. It was Essica.

CHAPTER VIII.

"THOMAS! Curse you, get up!"

The old hostler, lying asleep on a bundle of hay on the floor of the stable, with his lantern burning dimly beside him, felt the sharp kick of a heavy boot, and starting up, saw Mr. Paul Lennox, somewhat dishevelled about his dress, glowering savagely down at him.

"Saddle your fastest horse!" he cried; "and be quick about it, too, if you do not want me to kill you!"

"Sir!" stammered the poor bewildered hostler, "it is nearly midnight."

"Midnight or morning, bring out that horse, or it will be the last night you will ever see!"

Surly and muttering, the man started into the stables.

"The upstart—the dirty tyrant, to threaten me, and I been at Brandt this twenty year!"

Mr. Lennox was stamping furiously in the stable-door, the cold sweat standing in drops upon his face. Thomas saddled and bridled the horse, and led him forth.

He was a beautiful creature—a fiery, large-eyed roan, with an arching neck and long slender limbs. The old hostler patted him fondly and regretfully.

"He was Mr. Renshaw's horse," he said, "and powerful fond of his master. You'll have to be a bit careful, sir—he's flighty, but there aint a fleeter in all the country round."

Lennox leaped into the saddle with a smothered oath.

"Don't wait for me," he said, "I shall not return to-night;" and dashed off like an arrow down the avenue.

Well, the deed was done, and revenge was glutted! He looked off to the hamlet lights, and thought of a patch of bloody sand under the rocks there. Perhaps they had found him already; perhaps they would not find him until morning, when the fishermen came trooping down the shore to unmoor their boats. By that time he would be beyond pursuit.

How fast the horse flew on, and what a magnificent thorough-bred he was! So he had been fond of his master? Lennox laughed in his throat.

"Was it cowardly?" he said; "I do not know. I might have given him a chance for his life; but all's fair in love and war, and this savors a little of both."

Then he thought of Essica; but, somehow, there was something in the thought that made him put it hurriedly by; he turned, instead, to the road he was traversing. It led from the hamlet, and not towards it. It was new to him—he had chosen it quite unconsciously, but the horse took to it in gallant style, and never had iron-clad hoofs rung faster on the rough soil. They were still skirting the sea, with its ragged cliffs and hoarse pursuing moan; but the things around him had grown strange and unfamiliar, for they were passing many and many a mile beyond Brandt.

"Better to be Abel than Cain," yes, a thousand times better. Flying on through the night, like the Wild Huntsman himself, some like thought might have crossed Paul Lennox's brain; but not for long, I trow, for this man was, and had been all his life, as cruel and relentless as the grave.

Detection! That was the fear before him now—the goad that urged him onward. Could the horse but last, he thought, to carry him through the night, by morning he should be so far distant from the scene of the crime, that further escape would be but a matter of leisure.

Suddenly, and in the full maturing of this plan, the horse in question stumbled and fell. The road had broken abruptly into a rough and narrow way, curving about the cliffs like a ribbon, and part of it engulfed already by the full tide. He must have missed the right track somewhere behind, Lennox thought, or the horse, perhaps, had led him wrong. Half stunned by his fall, he disengaged himself from the saddle, and rising up, loosened the girths, and taking the bridle-rein in his hand, coaxed and urged the animal to his feet again.

There he stood, not a rod distant from the verge of the cliffs, bruised and trembling, and eye to eye with his rider. Pale with rage, Lennox essayed to lead him forward in vain! Some demon had entered

suddenly into the creature. With a toss of his superb head, he reared upon his haunches, and then plunged, dragging his rider nearly to the ground. His large eyes were dilated; his flanks quivering; the blood dripped under the cruel bit where it cut into the flesh. Lennox struck him mercilessly again and yet again.

"Do you scent your master's blood?" he laughed. "I have heard of such things. Come, come! this will not do."

Still the horse snorted wildly and tossed his head. The large eyes, almost human in their misery, kept their strained and frightened look; the foam, too, had started out on his shining hide. But he stirred not. Lennox stood with the bridle over his arm, gazing gloomily down at the sea. Something like despair was tugging for the first time at that bold bad heart of his. What was to be done? Bah! he had conquered the master—could he not quell the beast? With a cruel word on his lips, Lennox leaped into the saddle again.

"By heaven! you *shall* go on!" he cried, plunging his rowels deep into the horse's quivering flanks. "I have you now!"

Yes, but not a rod distant, sloping straight downward, yawned the edge of the cliffs, black and bald in the night. Goaded into madness, the horse fell back again upon his haunches, and then reared once in the air, and then—leaped forward. He struggled fiercely to hold him back—to fling himself to earth again. Too late—too late, even for brute instinct to prevail. One instant hanging on that narrow verge, Paul Lennox saw the sea before, and the sky above, and the night around. Only one instant; and then where horse and rider had been, nothing was left but blank darkness and the very stillness of death.

CHAPTER IX.

A LOW sunshiny room, with whitewashed walls; a window at the foot of the bed hung with a muslin curtain, through whose parted folds one could see some rippling poplar leaves, touched with gold along their shining edges. A delicious floor, scrubbed to spotless whiteness; at the head of the bed a stand, with some vials upon it, and a bottle of wine, and a glass filled with asters and cardinal flowers; and sitting at the window abovementioned,

Mistress Moll Darke, alert of eye and nimble of finger, mending nets in the sun.

Autumn, surely, it must be, by those poplar leaves and asters, and that sunshine, hazy and faint upon the floor. A door opened softly down the length of the room, and a woman came in.

Moll Darke did not need to turn from her work to know who was there. The sweeping black dress and noiseless step she could never mistake.

Miss Glendenning, with her hat in her hand, advanced to the foot of the bed.

"How is he?" she whispered.

Mistress Darke jerked her head to one side.

"You can see for yourself," she replied.

Miss Glendenning bent and took up a shadowy hand lying upon the snow-white counterpane, then, like one in fear and trembling, slowly her eyes sought the face above it. Ah, what a thin white face it was, worn and sharpened by weeks and weeks of pain, and fever, and delirium! One would have hardly recognized Guy Renshaw in the worn and wasted figure lying so still among Mistress Darke's white pillows.

His head was turned from the light—he was sleeping quietly. Through his half-parted lips the breath came and went as regularly as a child's. Miss Glendenning laid his thin hand gently down.

"He is better," she said, sighing.

"Yes," answered Mistress Darke.

Miss Glendenning drew the black shawl around her shoulders.

"I shall not come again," she said; "he will live, and I am going away from Brandt."

"Going away?"

Moll Darke lifted her brows and looked at her curiously.

"Yes," cried Miss Glendenning, with a quick passionate gesture, "and where the things of this world can reach me no more. Do not tell him when he recovers how I have been here in secret, or how I have watched over him. Promise me!"

"I promise," said Moll, laconically.

Miss Glendenning turned to go; then turned back suddenly, and sinking down beside the bed, took Renshaw's hand again, and covered it wildly with her kisses and her tears.

"I have loved him—loved him—loved him for years!" she moaned; "had he but

returned that love, I might have been a better woman. God forgive me the one wrong I have done him! God be praised that he will be happy yet!"

Mistress Moll Darke looked on in stolid amaze.

"Humph! and this is why you go away?" she said.

"No, not for this alone. My life has been a failure, a mistake. Perhaps there is time left to right it yet—who knows? I will make the venture, at least. Farewell."

She swept away from the bedside, across the streak of sunshine on the floor, her head bent, her arms fallen at her side.

"Farewell!" she repeated, sadly, from the threshold; then the black dress disappeared, the door closed, and on Guy Renshaw's face Miss Glendenning had looked her last forever.

A long slanting bar of sunset light, purple and amber mingled, lay on the white-washed wall, when Moll Darke, dropping her needle and meshblock, rose up from the window. Advancing on tiptoe to the footboard of the bed, she peered cautiously over, and met a pair of languid dark eyes fixed upon her earnestly. Mr. Renshaw had awakened from his sleep.

"Where am I?" he asked, faintly.

"Hush—do not talk. You're at the inn."

"How long have I been ill?"

She frowned, and laid her finger on her lip.

"For weeks—it is autumn now. You have been very sick. Hush!"

Vainly his eyes pleaded—she was relentless; he drank the draught she held to his lips, and turning from her, fell into a deep untroubled sleep.

He asked no questions of her the next day, nor the next, although he was stronger and better. Perhaps as Memory began to assert her power, there was little need for him to question any one.

Lying in that cheery room, full of hazy sunshine, with the voice of the sea, and the rustle of the poplar leaves, and the croning of Moll Darke's old songs about him, he had plenty of leisure to think out the matter by himself, and undisturbed. However, on the third day, Moll was summoned to his side again.

"Where did that blade strike me?" he asked, dreamily.

"In the side and in the breast."

"And he—where is he now?"

She lowered her dark forehead.

"Can you bear to know?"

"I can, indeed."

"God forgive him!—he is in his grave!" she said.

Renshaw's eyes filled slowly up with blank amazement. He did not speak for a long time. Finally he resumed:

"How—when did it happen?"

"Weeks ago. He was thrown from his horse over the cliffs. It was on the night when you were wounded."

His face contracted in a spasm of pain.

"And Essica?" he murmured.

Moll's forehead lowered again.

"She's at Brandt, young master, and much broken in health and spirits, I hear. I've not seen her since the night when she came flying in, like mad, to tell us that you lay dead on yonder shore. Ah, and a woe-ful night it was!"

"She!" cried Renshaw.

"It was she who found you, and it might be said it was she who saved your life. Leastwise, you'd have died upon the sands afore morning light."

"Essica—how could it have been Essica?" he cried; "how came she there?"

"The child was clean daft," answered the old woman; "she was running away from Brandt."

Pale as his cheek was, a fiery red flush crept slowly into it, and something like a moan burst from his lips.

"Poor child! poor little girl!"

"There!" cried Mistress Moll, grimly, "you have talked enough—no more to-day. She doesn't come here, let me tell you, but the servants do, and there's been loads of fruits, and jellies, and flowers sent from Brandt. Now, young master, go to sleep."

The subject was not renewed between them for many long days after. Renshaw was sufficiently convalescent then to walk about his cheery little chamber, or sit in Moll Darke's seat at the one window, feeling the while in all his exhausted veins health, and strength, and manhood creeping back again.

Pleasant it was to sit in that lovely autumn weather, looking off toward Brandt, watching the blue sea curling up the rocks, and the fishing-boats dotting the broad bay. He had come back to life from the very valley and shadow of death. The old

world seemed to have grown younger and better. There was a joy unspeakable in breathing the free air of heaven, and gazing upon earth and sky once more.

Coming suddenly behind him one day while he sat in his old place, Mistress Moll whipped something from her bosom, and dropped it into his lap. It was a roll of papers, tied with a slip of ribbon.

"'Twas sent from Brandt," explained Mistress Moll, "more than a week ago; but the surgeon bade me keep it from you. I am told to say that Miss Glendenning sends kindly greeting with it, and begs to be forgiven for withholding it wrongfully, when it should have been yours at your mother's death."

She was gone in a moment, and before Renshaw could recover from his surprise. He took up the papers, and loosing the ribbon, saw, as one in a dream might see, that it was the handwriting of his dead and buried mother which lay before him; and with the solemn sea whispering in his ear, and the stately walls of Brandt shining afar in the distance, Guy Renshaw began to read this record of a life:

"Before your eyes shall rest upon these pages, I shall be no more; and when you know, as know you will, that the estates of Brandt have fallen to a stranger by the request of your thrice-wretched mother—that you, in short, are disinherited, turn, I pray you, to this sad story, and do not hate her—do not curse her, even though it has fallen upon you to reap the wages of her suffering and her sin.

* * * * *

"I was a petted, proud and beautiful belle when I married your father, Guy, and, withal, a mere child in years. I did not love him—he was older than I, and the marriage was not of my seeking. Happy with me he never was. Two years after your birth he died, leaving you to the entire guardianship of his own family—ah! he loved you too fondly to trust you with me! and the tie betwixt us was thus sundered even at that early day. Had it not been for this unhappy circumstance you and I might have loved each other better, my child.

"For six years I remained a widow, plunging anew into fashionable life, and regaining again the old dominion which I had lost over men's hearts—yea, and women's too. It was then that I first met

Colonel Brandt—a dark, haughty young aristocrat, enormously wealthy, and the handsomest gallant of his day. Blood more fierce, and hot, and cruel than that in his veins never flowed; and yet it was reserved for me, as a part of my unhappy destiny, to love that man, wild and reckless as he was, with all the intensity of a life that can never know but one such blossoming.

“Why tell the story here? Six months after marriage the new toy had ceased to please—he had tired of me, and, as a disappointed and resentful woman, I first entered into the shadows of this place. Better, far better if foot of mine had never crossed its threshold! There was a fatality attending even the first hour of my coming. We had a guest at dinner that day—the agent of Colonel Brandt’s estates—a young lawyer then but little known to the world—Paul Lennox. How thoroughly I disliked the man even at that first interview! How quick I was to recognize the antagonism between us from the very beginning! He sat at the table that day watching me with those close cruel eyes of his, and laughing as he said:

“‘You must take care of this husband of yours, Mrs. Brandt; he is a wild fellow, and much given, I hear, to donning new loves before he has doffed old ones. I assure you, there are hidden beauties around Brandt of which you have no idea.’

“And here Colonel Brandt interposed, with a face grown thunderous, and for the remainder of the meal he spoke little, ate nothing, and ended by quarrelling with Lennox fiercely over the wine.

“I was walking in the garden that night, when I encountered Paul Lennox again.

“‘Would you see a charming picture?’ he asked, with his finger on his lip; ‘then, I pray you, come with me.’

“He led me up to the mossy wall, and bade me crouch down and look beyond it. What did I see? Only an old ruined porter’s lodge, not a rod distant among some trees, and walking in their shadow a pair of fond and foolish lovers, talking in the low and tender tones that lovers talk in. For the girl—so lovely a face I had never before seen; it was like an old Greek antique, shining out of magnificent golden hair, and sad as Niobe. When you look on Essica Darke’s face, you will know, better than I can tell, what her mother was

like fifteen years ago. In the man, tall, dark and aristocratic, holding this beautiful creature to him as only a lover holds his beloved, I beheld—my husband!

“Do not think there was any scene. I retreated quickly with Paul Lennox, leaving them there together. It was my first day at Brandt, Guy—do you wonder now that I hate the place? and who, think you, was this rival of mine? A wild fisher-girl—a nameless waif of the coast, saved from the wreck of some foreign bark that had gone down one night upon the bar. A homeless, friendless child, with nothing in the world to hold his dark jealous heart by except her marble face and golden hair.

“‘He loves her!’ said Paul Lennox, gnashing his teeth, and opening to my gaze that moment his own heart; ‘and but for him she might have been my wife long ago! She has chosen his love to mine—well, much joy may it bring her! Lady of Brandt, one hair of her golden head is dearer to your loyal lord than your whole body. You see that pretty gardener’s cottage down yonder across the fields? She is living there, and—there is a child.’

“I thought I should have died! What passed in my heart that night words of mine can never tell. I had loved him, you know, as I had never loved before, as I should never love again.

“‘Do not mistake,’ Paul Lennox said, darkly, ‘that child of Christine’s will be heir to these estates. If Brandt dies tomorrow, he will leave you but a pittance—I have seen his will.’

“I was an injured, suffering and revengeful woman, and from that hour the fate of Christine and her child was sealed. That Paul Lennox had loved the girl madly there is no doubt. With all his heart and soul, I think, he entered into the work of her destruction. Night after night, week after week, did he haunt that pretty gardener’s cottage across the fields. He had left Brandt, after a fierce scene with the colonel, and gone down to the little inn kept upon the shore by a young gipsy woman—Moll Darke. From the inn he wrote ardent letters and despatched lover’s offerings to the girl, each and all of which were intercepted by Brandt. Daily I watched his dark and jealous face grow darker and more jealous—he had never ceased to love her, as far as that fierce selfish nature of his was capable of loving.

Good heaven! how I longed to spring upon him like a tiger-cat when he has sat at my side, thinking, I know, of her white face, and tear the treacherous heart of his from his breast!"

The first paper ended here. The next were leaves from a diary, old and discolored:

"June 10th.—I saw the child to-day—it has its mother's face. How dare she trust her dainty treasure so near the claws of such a wild thing as I have become? Another visit from Paul Lennox. I hate and fear the man, yet he can serve me, and I tolerate him. Will this plan of ours succeed? Will my husband indeed cast this girl off if he thinks her faithless? 'Tis an infamous plot! Why do I yield to it? Why? Have I not been wronged? Then will I wrong in turn. Love has slipped me by, and all earthly peace with it; but these estates of Brandt—in spite of this Christine—in spite of her child, these, at least, shall yet be mine."

"June 15th.—Colonel Brandt left for New York this noon. Our farewell was very cold. Does he suspect I have discovered his hidden beauty, and did he kiss his child, I wonder, before going? He will never look upon her face again. Lennox is still at the inn. He will take charge of the child—it must be carried from the country altogether. Sometimes I have my doubts of him. Is he bad enough to kill it, I wonder? Pshaw! He would not dare."

"July 1st.—What a terrible ominous night! There is not a breath of air stirring. The west looks as if it had been smeared in blood. How strangely nervous I am! Lennox said to me to-day, 'if the child is left upon the shore at a certain point, by midnight the tide will carry her off!' His anonymous note to Colonel Brandt will bring him, I am sure, to-night. The message to Christine was sent at sunset. If Brandt returns to find her at their old tryst with Lennox, he will—he must repudiate her utterly. The poor unsuspecting child, how easily she has fallen into this trap! What! am I pitying this hated rival of mine—the pretty doll that has come between me and the only man I ever loved? Hark! I hear the tramp of a horse's hoofs. Lennox has just passed my window—he must be at the porter's lodge by this time! Yes, it is Brandt!"

Renshaw took up the next paper.

"It was Brandt, indeed, Guy, coming in silence and in stealth to prove the truth of the note that had been written him. I watched him in the darkness creeping like a snake along the path to the lonely porter's lodge—I knew that she was waiting there, and Paul Lennox, likewise, and that my revenge had come. Yet, God forgive me, dark and cruel as he was, I never thought he would kill her. I never thought that when Paul Lennox swore to her faithlessness, that the oath of a liar and a villain would cost the poor innocent child her life. It might lead him to spurn her, perhaps to cast her off forever, but, no, no! not to kill her!"

"The deed was done in that old porter's lodge. Haggard and wild, Paul Lennox burst in upon me, with the child in his arms.

"'He has killed her!' he cried. 'My God! and she was his wife!'

"'What do you mean?' I said, sight and sense reeling.

"'I mean that there was a secret marriage betwixt them two years ago. He has never acknowledged her, the purse-proud aristocrat! You are the wronged one; and not she, and I—I have had my revenge!'

"'The child!' I cried.

"'Let it go with the mother!' he answered; then the room reeled around me, and I knew no more.

"I lay fainting, sinking, dying of fever for weeks after that dreadful night. I saw Colonel Brandt but once again. It was one day when I knelt beside him, weak and shuddering, and heard the marriage service read again. He never asked for the child, nor sought to know its fate; and six months after he had fallen in a duel with Paul Lennox in the Bois de Boulogne, Paris.

"Three years ago, for the first time since that dreadful tragedy, I encountered Paul Lennox again. He came to me, insolent, threatening. The child, he assured me, was not dead. He had never intended to kill her. She had grown up in the hamlet inn as the granddaughter of that gipsy Moll Darke, in whose charge he had placed her on the night of her mother's murder. She was the heiress of Brandt, and he had already wedded her—a mere child—in secret. Great heaven! it was for that fate

that he had spared her! Better far if she had shared her mother's grave!

"My death, he knows, cannot be far distant; he haunts me continually. By the last will of Colonel Brandt, all his earthly possessions were bequeathed to me, and Paul Lennox offers me only this alternative—to disinherit my son, and restore the estates to the child of Christine by will, or to brave the disgrace and shame of an utter exposure, through which they must ultimately be wrested from you by the strong arm of the law. He has shown me to-day the proofs of Colonel Brandt's first marriage. It is all that I can do to expiate my part in that terrible crime, and thank God that the child was spared! I have looked upon her face—it is like her mother's. Guy, forgive me, forgive me! I have sinned, but I have suffered. I disinherit you only to right a woeful wrong."

That was all; the papers went fluttering out of Renshaw's fallen and nerveless hand. All the darkness and the mystery swept away at last! The story of that dead sailor, the shadows over Essica Darke's life, the one wrong of his own made clear to him indeed! and with a strange mingling of joy and sorrow, of hope and despair, Guy Renshaw covered his face with his hands, and, strong man as he was, in heart and soul, at least, wept like a child.

* * * * *

A patch of sunlight was sifting through the evergreens, across the grave of Mrs. Braudt. Autumn had deepened into winter, and Winter had sifted his white snows on the shore, and Spring had come again, with her daisies and her bluebirds, and a thousand bright and beautiful things. The modest star-grasses had begun to blossom around the low mound; solemn and white shone the marble shaft in the sunset. Presently the little gate swung back, a sound of footsteps echoed on the gravelled walk, and some one came into the enclosure.

A young girl, in deepest black, with

great lonesome eyes and a pale chastened face. She came up to the grave, and slipping a wreath of English violets from her wrist, laid it upon the marble shaft. Then, suddenly, out of the shadow of that shaft arose another figure, tall, bronzed and bearded, who advanced and stood beside her near the grave.

"Essica!"

"Guy!"

"Have you forgiven her?"

Her eyes filled slowly.

"The dead—ah yes!"

Guy Renshaw bent and pressed his lips to those other lips, red and quivering.

"Essica, I have come for you!" he said.

They knelt together beside that grave, their hands clasped, her head upon his breast, her eyes o'er-filled with sweet delicious tears.

O Love! triumphant over wrong and sorrow—sweetest balm that ever grew in Gilead, through much pain and travail too lives in thee are made perfect at last!

* * * * *

Among the holy sisterhood of a certain convent in the good city of Montreal there is to-day a nun, tall and angular, with a pale face and yellowish downcast eyes. The superior calls her Sister Magdalene. Once she was Edith Glendenning.

Have the rigid austerities of that life of hers indeed availed? Does she remember no more the things of this world—its poor vanities, its perishing idols? Is the heart of the woman dead within her? Alas! who may know?

One atom of dust cannot be missed. The busy world goes on. There are happy children's voices ringing to-day through the halls of Brandt—ay, and sunshine there and summer weather; and the dark and sorrowful past is forgotten, and down in that little fishing-hamlet among the headlands, Mistress Moll Darke has been laid to sleep with her fathers, and the inn of the "Three Petrels" has passed away.

So one thing cometh and another goeth, even like the tides upon the shore.

ESCAPING THE GUARD.

BY M. QUAD, OF THE MICHIGAN PRESS.

THIS was what I heard:

"Halt! Halt there, you Johnny Reb, or we'll blow your head off!"

This was what I saw:

Six bluecoats in the underbrush, three on each side of the narrow road, muskets all held to cover me.

I bent down, and dug the spurs into my horse, but he had not made six leaps when he fell on his knees, rolled over, and was dead in a moment, falling in such a way as to hold me fast by the leg.

"Confound it! Didn't we tell you we'd shoot?" exclaimed one of the Federals, a corporal, as the six came up and began heaving at the horse, to set me free. "You ought to have halted when we shouted, and thus saved a good Confederate horse for Uncle Sam."

It was near Cynthiana, Kentucky, and on the morning of the same summer day when Morgan fought a battle, and lost so many good men. I had started out on a foraging expedition soon after daybreak, and in returning had ridden directly upon the Federal "fellers," who were cautiously creeping down to surprise Morgan, backed by a force which ought to have eaten him up in ten minutes.

How I came to be in Confederate uniform, to be a member of Morgan's command, to think and act with Confederates, is a matter which I shall not bring up here. I am going to relate my adventures, without fear of politicians, or care for what has passed.

It was no great job to get my leg free, and then two of the men were detailed to conduct me to the rear, or back to the advancing army. They were jolly good fellows, having no thought of malice or word of taunt. They had captured me fairly, there was no chance for me to escape, and I made the best of it. I had received a lieutenant's commission not two weeks before, and it was rather hard to be captured just as I was sliding gracefully into position. But it's a victory to-day and defeat to-morrow in war, and soldiers were nearly all philosophers.

I was greeted with cheers and shouts as

I reached the main body, being the first armed "reb" which some of the men had ever seen. Their criticisms were good-natured ones, their conduct courteous, and I was rather sorry when a guard came for me to report at headquarters. Headquarters were on the move, and had only time to take my "pedigree," when the guard was ordered to conduct me along.

Passing from hand to hand, always closely guarded, I at length ascertained that my destination was Johnson's Island, opposite Sandusky, Ohio, which was a great depot for captured Confederates during the war. *En route* to Sandusky, I having been joined by ten others of the command, we were well treated by the guards, but they at the same time kept a close watch of our movements.

From the first moment of capture I had been constantly looking for a chance to escape, but none offered until we were approaching Sandusky, about five o'clock in the evening. The rear door of the car was open, and we were in the last car. I sat nearest the door, and observing that the guard was reading, that the train was moving slowly, and that there were no stumps along the track, I made up my mind to spring to the door and leap off.

Carefully gathering up my legs, and watched by two of my friends, I at length made a bolt. I had all the advantage, and should surely have made the jump, but that my coat caught the handle of the door as I went by, and the guard had time to seize me.

"We went over him sure?" I exclaimed, attempting no resistance, but pointing behind at the track. "We must have cut the poor fellow right in two."

"What was it?" inquired the guard, astonished at my passiveness, and beginning to think that I had not intended an escape.

I informed him that I saw a bloody mass on the track, leaped to see what it was, and that some one had been ground beneath the wheels. As I took my seat, and continued to talk about the "fearful accident," the guard was blinded, and the circumstance was forgotten in the bustle of

reaching the city. I do not know what rule was practised in other cases, but in ours we were hustled out of the cars, marched out of the depot, and then allowed to walk along at our own pace, part of the guards being in front and part behind.

My friends had given up all hope of escape. At our journey's end, in a Northern State, as good as landed on the island, they believed that any attempt would be useless. Not so with me. If I could once elude the guard, I believed there was a chance of getting away altogether. I knew that the only way to get free was to make a sudden dash down some street or up some stairs. I therefore looked keenly about me as we passed along.

I have not told you that I was a printer. Such was my profession before the war, and I was called a fast type-sticker wherever I worked. Therefore, as we passed along, and I saw the sign of The Daily Register over a hall door, it was natural enough that I should spring off the walk and dash up stairs, as I was determined to dash somewhere.

The rear guard shouted "stop him!" as they saw me leave the walk, but there was some little confusion, which gave me an advantage. I bounded up the steps, two at a time, reached a hall, turned to the right, and was in the composing-room. It was empty of life, the men being at supper. Just as the guards struck the first step below, I jerked off my coat, thrust it into the big coal stove, off with vest and hat, leaped on to a stool which stood in front of a well-filled "case," and when the soldiers burst in the door I was putting up the type for dear life.

"Where is he? Where did he go?" shouted three of the men at once, rushing around the room in their anxiety.

"Where did who go? What do you mean?" I replied, turning around on my stool as I spaced out my second line.

"Why, one of our Reb prisoners is up here somewhere—he made a dash from the walk, and must have come in here."

"Can't be possible," I returned, commencing on another line. "I have been here for the last half hour, and have seen no one. I heard a great racket on the stairs a few minutes ago, and perhaps that was he."

Not questioning my word at all, the sol-

diers rushed out, and began a search of the building, continuing it half an hour before returning. They then came back and reported that the man must have slipped out in some way.

"But he can't escape!" exclaimed one of the men, pulling a paper from his pocket. "Here is his description: 'Five feet ten inches, auburn hair, blue eyes, mole on right cheek, scar on right hand, one front tooth gone.'"

It was the greatest effort of my life to reach out that right hand with the "scar" on it after a figure "8," thrusting it right under the man's nose, but I did so. His eyes were within two feet of the "auburn hair, blue eyes and mole," but they were as blind as those of an owl in a July day. I promised to make a "local" of the circumstance, and to give the bolter's description; and the three went out, just as four or five of the men returned from supper.

"Hello! tramp, where are you from?" exclaimed one of the compositors, looking me over.

"Dropped down from Toledo," I replied. "I didn't find any one in the office, and thought I'd have a turn at this manuscript, just to see if I had forgotten how to decipher spider tracks."

"I'll be shot if he hasn't been setting up the old man's manuscript, and he has got it right, too!" replied the man, glancing at the lines in my stick.

The writing was the worst I had ever seen, but I had a peculiar *forte* of reading what no one else could read. What had bothered the men was plain as day to me. To increase their surprise, I picked up two or three pages and read them right off. The foreman, whose name was Ten-Eyck, if I remember right, came in at this time. After asking my name, where I was from, and so forth, he told me that I could have a "sit" for a few days, as he had never before seen a compositor who could "jerk sense" so readily out of the chief editor's scrawls.

When the boys understood that I had no money, they gave me a lunch. I took a "case," and was soon as much at home as any of them.

I pondered quite a while over my promise to make an item in regard to the escape of the prisoner, but finally concluded that it would divert suspicion to do so.

The city editor coming along, I detailed the circumstance, and later in the evening I had the manuscript to set up. It was rather odd, my putting in type, to be scattered over the city and country, an account of my own escape, but I set it up exactly as written.

The night passed off quietly, and when the boys started for home, at three o'clock, they "threw in" till I had money enough to get a bed and breakfast. I went to a small hotel, turned in, and was at the office at eleven o'clock the next day, to "throw in a case" with the rest.

We had been at work half an hour, when the apprentice boy picked up a copy of the morning issue and read the item about my escape, reading it aloud. Nearly all the men made comments, and none of them were favorable to me. My left-hand man had said nothing, but I suddenly saw that he was looking sharply at me. He saw everything but the mole on my right cheek, and he soon took occasion to make sure of that. I felt it in my bones that he was mentally comparing me with the description, but I worked on as if suspecting nothing.

"I don't feel well this morning," he remarked, after having his case about half in. "If you'll throw in that half column of 'solid,' over there on the stone, for me, I'll give you half a dollar."

I agreed, he handed over the money, and he then hurriedly washed up, put on his coat, and went out with a step altogether too quick for a sick man. He was going to betray me, and I knew it!

I put down my type, rinsed off my hands, borrowed a dollar of the foreman, telling him that I wanted to send a telegram to my mother; and in going out I in some way got into a linen coat belonging to one of the men. The compositor was not five minutes ahead of me in getting down stairs. Hardly knowing which way to turn, I walked over to a hotel on a corner, called the West House. As I stood for a moment in the hall door I caught sight of the compositor and two soldiers coming down the street. As they would have to pass me, I went further in, walked up two flights of stairs, and went boldly into a room. I looked about me, and saw a man sitting at a desk. "What in the devil do you want here?" growled a voice; and I caught sight of a man writing at a stand.

"O! ah! excuse me," I replied, and shut the door and passed on. After trying several doors, I found another unlocked, and this time met with no opposition.

My first thought had been to secure a hiding-place, but the sight of several good suits of clothing hanging up decided me to make an exchange. Locking the door, I threw off my suit, and was soon standing in another and a much better one. There was a Sunday silk hat on the stand, and it was a good fit for me. In throwing off the old clothes a pocket-book dropped from the compositor's coat, and I opened it, to find myself ten dollars better off. I was sorry to take the man's money, but there was no safe way to return it.

Picking up an ivory-headed cane, I sallied out. I met no one until I reached the front door, and then caught another glimpse of the printer and the soldier. Other soldiers were also hurrying around, and the idlers at the corner seemed considerably excited.

"O, they'll catch him—no fear of that!" said one of the group as I passed. "He played the game pretty well, but they are at the depots, down at the docks, and will have him before he is an hour older!"

I had intended to go to the depot, but this remark showed me that it would be unsafe. I must either hide in the city until the excitement had passed, or else tramp into the country; and I decided on the latter course. Taking one of the streets running south, I walked along at an easy gait, and was soon outside of business circles. I soon came upon a man sitting in the door of a carpenter shop, eating his dinner. He looked up as I passed, and I had not gone ten steps when he called me back.

"Let me see that cane!" he commanded, reaching out and taking the stick.

"Ha! where did you pick this up?"

"In Toledo," I replied, beginning to see trouble ahead. "Why, what of it?"

"That cane belongs to Burt Leonard," he continued. "See, here are my initials—S. J. S.—and cut them before giving him the stick. And I'm dinner if you haven't got on his new Sunday suit, hat and all!"

I endeavored to make him believe that he was mistaken, but he would listen to no explanations. He stated that Burt would soon be back, and contended that if I was not a thief I would at least sit down and

wait until his friend came. This I agreed to, and we both went into the shop. My only chance was to quiet him, and I made up my mind to do it. As we reached a point half way down the shop I suddenly jumped and struck him behind the ear, knocking him over a bench. Before he could rise I hit him on the head with a plane, and he fell back stunned. I knew that he was not badly hurt, and so made haste from the shop, passing at the door two small boys who had been witnesses of the blow.

Getting into the street, and finding it deserted—it being the hour of dinner—I ran south three blocks, and then turned west. As I made this turn I heard a shout, and looking back, saw two men and the boys after me, hooking ahead three blocks. I saw five or six men loading something into a wagon. Capture was certain if I kept to the street, and so I entered a gate, passed around a house, through a gate in a division fence, and entered the summer kitchen of another house. Part of the dinner was on the stove, but no one was in sight. Entering the real kitchen, I crossed it, and went into a bedroom to the left, just fairly getting in as a servant came from the dining-room.

There was immediately a great outcry. The men—there were half a dozen by this time—rushed into the shed, into the kitchen, the inmates of the house left the table, and the kitchen was a perfect Babel for two or three minutes. At last something like order prevailed, and I heard the words:

"We are after an escaped rebel prisoner, who also stole a suit of clothes at the West House. He is in your house somewhere, for we were not ten feet behind when he entered the shed."

The woman screamed, the servant girl screamed, and the man of the house told the men to make an immediate search. Now they would find me! There were half a dozen dresses hanging in the closet, and I backed into the corner, pulled them in front of me, and waited. One of the men came into the bedroom, looked under the bed, and then cautiously pulled open the closet door.

"He isn't here!" he remarked to himself, and went away, leaving the door open. The rest of the crowd had gone through into the hall, and I had some hope of es-

caped, when the frightened servant girl came into the room. She looked into the closet, and then attempted to take down one of the dresses which concealed me. I pulled and she pulled, but I was the stoutest. As she persisted, I saw that I must be discovered, and so I made a sudden jump, and had my fingers on her throat before she had scarcely seen me. Holding her just tight enough to prevent her from screaming, I whispered:

"I am that rebel! If you attempt to scream out I shall stab you to the heart! If you do as I say, I shall go right out, and not hurt you!"

Although my grasp could not have pained her much, the girl was nearly dead. I thought sure that I had made either a lunatic or an idiot of her. I heard the men up stairs, and so I let go my grasp, slipped out, turned the button, and had reached the shed, when she gave several screams which could have been heard three blocks away. I heard the men running, and I dodged out into the yard, ran through a barn, and was probably four blocks away before the girl had given any correct information. I ran south two or three blocks, and then east four or five, meeting plenty of people, but giving them no heed. I thought I was getting along finely, when I heard shouts behind me, and knew that my pursuers were on my track.

I was then near a church. Leaping the fence, I made a short cut into a street running south, ran about a block, and then dashed into the open door of a private dwelling. There was no one in the room, which was the parlor, and I tossed my hat into a corner, seized a magazine from the table, and sat down on the sofa. I had not yet got over puffing and blowing when a boy came in from another room, starting a little at the sight of me.

"Bub, is your father at home?" I inquired, giving him a pleasant smile.

He informed me that his mother was a widow, and went off to call her. She came in directly, when I introduced myself as "Mr. Jones," and informed her that I was soliciting Bibles, tracts, hymn books, and other proper reading matter for the benefit of the ungodly rebels languishing in confinement on Johnson's Island. She was about to reply when some one came up the steps and inquired:

"Say, Mrs. Weaver, have you seen any

one run by here?—a red-headed man, with a plug hat on?"

Both mother and son replied in the negative; and when the man had gone the widow went to hunting up books. After half an hour she brought me seven. It was now between one and two o'clock, and as I wanted to kill time I made arrangements for dinner, and after the meal sat and talked until four o'clock. She then recommended me to another neighbor, and, in brief, it was dark before I went beyond the block.

At the last house I complained of the set of my hat and of the headache which it gave me, and the lady made an exchange with me, giving me a felt hat but little worn. As soon as I got into the street I threw away the coat, stuck my pants into my boot tops, deposited the books in a yard, and walked right into town. As no one paid me any attention I made my way to the wharf, and lounged up to where the propeller Owego was loading.

I was certain that the depots would be watched, and so made up my mind to get off on the vessel if possible. After ascertaining that she was bound to Buffalo, and watching the roustabouts a few moments, I went into the warehouse, caught hold of a barrel, and rolled it up the plank. The mate did not notice me from the rest, and the men took me for a new hand.

Fifteen minutes after the planks were hauled in, and the boat was ready to start. I had not yet got on board, and the mate

sang out for me to cast the bowline off. As I rose up and heaved the line off the post some one seized my arm. I looked up, and stood face to face with the compositor who had left the office to betray me. Coming down the dock, not thirty feet away, were three or four armed soldiers.

It was all the work of an instant. I gave the man a blow in the face, turned and made the longest jump of my life, just catching the gangway with my fingers. Before the men had drawn me in the compositor leaped after me, but fell into the water, and was choking and gasping as the boat moved off. When drawn up some of the men questioned me as to the occurrence, but were satisfied with my statement that a constable was seeking to arrest me for a fight in a saloon.

Although no pursuit was made, I knew that I must look out on reaching Buffalo, as a telegram would be sent. The vessel was shorthanded, and the mate readily found me something to do to pay my passage. Reaching the dock at Buffalo, I beckoned a boy and his skiff alongside, and was off up the river before the Owego had been made fast. It was easy enough to get from Buffalo into Canada, but I was two months getting back into the Confederacy; and had scarcely entered service again when a Yankee bullet drove me out of it forever by shattering my elbow in such a horrible manner that the arm had to come off.

EXTRAORDINARY BIRTHS.

BY PROFESSOR SERANOS D. PATRIE.

WHEN human creatures come into this rackety world of ours with a rapidity far in excess of average experience, speculative *economists and philosophers* are prone to ask how we shall all find house room or elbow room in future centuries; how we shall avoid crowding out one another. The earth, it is true, is eight thousand miles in diameter, and the square miles of its surface are denoted by a long row of figures. Still its size is strictly defined and limited; we can (some of us, that is,) tell almost exactly the extent of dry land on which the foot of man can tread, and of water on which boats and ships can float. We can ascertain, approximately, the acreage of land that is necessary to grow corn and rice, vegetables and fruit, butchers' meat, dairy produce, etc., for the annual food of an average human being; and we can picture to ourselves a state of things in which the world's policeman will bid us "Move on." However, it will not be just yet; and perhaps a survival of the fittest, on Mr. Darwin's principle, will set everything to rights. In England, in the closing years of the seventeenth century, a tax was imposed on bachelors and widows, from which husbands and wives were exempt. This was so far a small incentive to matrimony; but, more money being wanted to carry on a war, a tax was soon afterwards laid on marriages and births; and this told in the opposite direction. These taxes were accompanied by another on deaths and burials, which might be interpreted as the expression of a wish on the part of the Legislature that the subjects of the sovereign would endeavor to live as long as they possibly could. But, in truth, there was no sentiment in the matter; the taxes were imposed simply because hard cash was wanted by the State.

It is an admitted fact, we believe, that when births are more numerous than one at a time, nobody seems delighted at it. The parents have more cares to look forward to than they desiderate; the domestic establishment is subject to much disarrangement and overturning; the daily or weekly outlay increases; and the complimentary "Welcome, little stranger!" is

sadly wanting in sincerity. The registrar-general, it may be presumed, can tell pretty nearly the ratio of twins to single births, in the average of years, over the whole kingdom. The excess beyond twins is more frequent than might perhaps be supposed; and is sometimes such as to be not a little startling. If it be true, as writers on vital statistics assert, that once in about eight thousand times a birth consists of triplets, we need not marvel that so many little coffins are made every year; for the poor triplets do not often grow up to be men and women.

When quadruplets occur, four at a birth, the incident is one—not for sounding of trumpets, perhaps, nor for beating of drums, but—for newspaper comment; and no small amount of celebrity attaches to the home of the family connected with the event. The registrar-general's annual reports, supplemented by entries in various periodicals, furnish many examples of these quadruplets; to be read, however, with a wholesome recognition of the fact that popular statements are sometimes in need of verification. Some years ago there was a favorite book called "A Residence on the Shores of the Baltic;" the authoress is said to have been one of four brothers and sisters born on the same day. This touches a subject which has been much discussed—the intellectual capacity of what may be called multiply children. The question has been put, are twins, triplets and quadruplets as clever as other people? but it is generally admitted that the materials for an answer have not yet been duly collected and examined. If it be asserted, as many persons do assert, that twins are not often intellectually distinguished, we are at once confronted with the case of two famous brothers, Lord Eldon and Lord Stowell, prodigies of judicial learning; although not twins to each other, each had a twin sister.

Setting aside, however, this question of intellectual capacity, we will jot down a few examples of quadruplets. About twelve years ago a poor woman near Cork had four children at a birth, two boys and two girls; whether they all lived and flourished, we

have no record. A parish register at Cambridge tells of a shoemaker, Henry Coe, whose wife had two boys and two girls at a birth; a procession of sixteen sponsors walked to church at the christening, four to answer for each of the little Crispins and Crispinas. Many years ago the Rev. Mr. Ryder, Vicar of Nuneaton, was blessed with four children in one day. The vicarage had, in truth, been a scene of momentous events in that year; for triplets had made their appearance barely twelve months before. One can imagine Mrs. Vicar feeling some of the perplexities attributed on lyrical authority to the old woman who lived in a shoe. About eight years ago a Glasgow newspaper announced a birth of quadruplets, all girls, and all born alive. Mrs. Shury, a cooper's wife at the West End of London, had twins early one year, and twins again before the year had quite expired; but the vicar's wife beat her by a long distance, and must have had a very vocal household. It must be a sad thing for the poor mother, when not a single tiny one is left to her after such an ordeal. This was the case at Seaton, in Devonshire, where a tombstone in the churchyard records that "Here lyeth ye Bodys of John and Richard and Edward, sons of John Roberts, and Elizabeth his wife, together with a daughter of the same persons, born at one birth. They dyed ye 9 day of September, 1697." At Bromsgrove, in 1810, were born four little girls at once, baptized Maria, Mary, Sarah and Elizabeth. When eleven years of age, they were seen in a cluster by a gentleman, who placed on record the result of his inquiries; the girls were dressed alike, and bore such a striking resemblance in form, features and general appearance, that he could not identify or discriminate them one from another. We might perchance imagine that, if these damsels grew up to womanhood, and to sweet-hearting affairs, there would occur a rare Comedy of Errors; no lover being able to determine which was his own particular pet treasure. But nature has an easy way of getting out of such difficulties. Maria, it appears, lived to the age of seventeen; Mary married, and had two children; Eliza lived to her thirty-second year; while Sarah married, had a son, and survived until a recent period. The brave mother of this bevy of girls did not quit the scene until she had counted eighty-three summers. More melancholy was the expe-

rience of a Bavarian mother some considerable number of years ago. Maria Thomanin, the wife of a mason at Augsburg, gave birth to quadruplets, who were baptized Andreas, Nicolaus, Maria Anna and Barbara. A broadside sheet is still extant, containing two wood engravings: one represents a woman in bed, visitors around her, and four dead infants laid out like so many dolls; while the other represents a funeral procession of acolytes, priests, bearers carrying four little coffins, and fifty couples of women attired in the quaint old Bavarian costume.

Quintuplets—the shortest name we can devise for five children at a birth—are of course very rare; but if the recorded statements are reliable, instances have actually occurred. The Globe newspaper, somewhat under twenty years ago, recorded the fact that the wife of a railway guard at Birmingham had five infants at a birth, three boys born alive and two girls stillborn. Mr. Thom, it is well known, has for many years been indefatigable in ferreting out the truth concerning centenarianism, and has made woeful havoc with many of the stories: showing how numerous are the ways exaggeration takes place in the estimates of the ages of very old persons. We do not know whether he has taken up, in a similar spirit, the statements relating to specially prolific births; but a search of an analogous kind was made by a gentleman into the truth of the Birmingham story; and the result came out in this form—that the children born at once were three instead of five, and and that they were all stillborn. The Lancet, in a notice of medical gossip some years ago, stated that an Italian woman at Rovigo had five female children at a birth; so we find the statement, and so we leave it. The Elgin Courant, just about the same period, recorded that Elspath Gordon, of Rothes, had quintuplets, two girls stillborn and three boys who lived a few hours after their birth. The celebrated discoverer of the circulation of the blood, Dr. Harvey, in a letter to Aubrey, spoke of "One Mr. Palmer's wife, of Kent, who did beare a child every day for five dales together;" but it is not clear from the context whether Harvey gave it as the result of his own knowledge and investigation, or merely repeated a rumor. Southey, in an article in the Quarterly Review, quoted a statement from Hakewill's "Apology," to the effect that an

epitaph in Dunstable church records the death of a woman who had quintuplets twice; besides triplets three times! We can only ask, "Is there such an epitaph now; and does it speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?" When a learned college believes a statement of facts coming within the range of its own special subjects, we usually feel that there must be "something in it." On this ground we notice a statement to the effect that the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, in Lincoln's Inn Fields, is said to contain, preserved in spirits, the bodies of five female infants, children of Margaret Waddington, a resident at Darling, near Blackburn; the five girls were born at once, three stillborn and two that died soon afterwards. One more instance. Quintuplets are recorded as having made their appearance at a village near Sheffield, forty-six years ago—one born dead, one that died before being baptized, and three that outlived that ceremony.

What shall we say of multiply births exceeding even the mystical number five? Shall we reject them at once, as altogether unbelievable; or shall we jot down the narratives as we find them, and leave each to fight its own battle as it may? One narrative is to the effect that at Dayton, in the State of Ohio, a German woman was taken ill while passing through the town; and that the result of the illness was in the form of six children, which she placed all together in a basket. "A lady of character saw and counted the children, and was told by the mother they were one birth." Perhaps most persons will opine that more reliable proof than this is necessary to insure belief. We find in Aubrey's *Natural History of Wiltshire*, published somewhat more than two centuries ago, a statement to the effect that Edith Bonham, of Wishford Magna, in that county, had seven children at a birth. "In this parish," Aubrey says, "there is a confident tradition that these children were all baptized at the font in this church; and that they were brought thither in a kind of chardger, which was dedicated to the church, and hung on two nails, which are to be seen there yet, near the belfree on the south side. Some old women are living that do remember the chardger. This tradition is entered in the register-book there, from whence I have taken this narrative." Here we find, then, that the testimony from Aubrey himself was limited

to seeing an entry in the parish register and two nails in the church wall; the old women could speak to having seen a chardger, charger or dish; but, beyond this, information is lacking. Another story of septuplets runs thus: In the *Kleyne Chronycke*, published at Amsterdam, in 1655, we are told that an engineer was told by an alewife that she was told by a burgomaster that he had been into a house near the Zuyder Zee, and saw seven children sitting by the fire, each with a porringer in his (or her) hand, and eating rice-milk with a spoon. The burgomaster said to the woman of the house, "Mother, you are very kind to your neighbors, since they leave their children to your care." "No, they are all my children, which I had at one birth; and if you will wait a moment, I will show you more that will surprise you." She went and fetched seven older children, similarly born on one day! How far the truth had been magnified in successive stages by the mother, plus the burgomaster, plus the alewife, plus the engineer, plus the chronicler, we are left to imagine as we may. Whether septuplets or seven-fold triplets are the more wonderful, 'twould not be easy to decide; but an old volume of the *Memoires de l'Academie Francaise* solemnly tells us that a baker's wife at Paris had triplet children every year for seven years in succession. Happy baker! But this, according to a Brussels journal, was actually exceeded in 1851, when a tradesman's wife had, for the eighth time, three children at a birth—twenty-four of them in eight births in nine years; "a desperate case for the husband," as the journalist sympathetically remarked, "who desired to transmit his family name to his offspring; for they were all girls."

Six, seven—are not these numbers high enough? We shall see. The Stamford Mercury, a few years ago, recorded eight children at a birth, three boys and five girls; but the paragraphist had to go to Trumbull County, in Ohio, for the locality. There is a statement in the *Journal des Savants*, on the authority of M. Seignette, to the effect that a woman at Rochelle had nine children at a birth, all stillborn! In 1851 a wonderful rumor spread about Sheffield, concerning the appearance of ten children at a birth! An old dame, Widow Platts, born in 1781, stated that she was one of the ten, and declared her mother had told her so! No other corroboratory evidence was attain-

able than an old copy of the *Leede Mercury*, quoting a letter received from *Sheffield*, with the additional statement that nine of the decuplets were stillborn.

But O! what a bouncer was that in a London daily paper, assigning to a Hindu woman at Ballygunge, near Calcutta, twenty-one boys at a birth! And in what sense are we to interpret an entry in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, to the effect that Mrs. Lilly, of Grantham, "was twice mother of twenty-two children?" Either that there were forty-four babies at two births, or that she was twice married, and had in all twenty-two children. We prefer to believe the latter, although the words seem to imply the former. Eclipsing every other marvel of this peculiar class is the assertion that a Dutch lady, the Countess of Hennesby, had exactly three hundred and sixty-five children at a birth! The story goes that this lady on one occasion discourteously rebuked a woman who asked for alms, and said something which irritated her to express a wish that the lady might soon have as many

children as there are days in the year; and so it was. Pepys declared that, when at Utrecht, he "saw the hill where they say the house stood wherein they were born"—a kind of evidence that just suited gossip Samuel. An ingenious conjecture has been hazarded that the interview may have taken place on the 3d of January, when the year was three days old; that the woman wished the countess might have as many children as there had been days in that year; and that the birth consisted of triplets.

Glancing at the above strange recitals we perceive that, whichever of them are true or partly true, they do not prove any abnormal increase in the sum total of humanity. The poor bantlings are either stillborn, or mostly die at an early age. In other words, a large family, a numerous progeny, a quiver full of arrows, does not depend on having a great number of children at a birth, so much as on the total number born to the same parent or parents during the whole of married life.